UNDERSTANDING DRAMA

CONTENTS

PART ONE

Problems of the Drama

PART TWO

Simpler Types

PART THREE

More Mature Types

CONTENTS

ETTER TO TEACHER AND STUDENTS

This textbook represents an attempt to embody the following principles: (1) the primary task in teaching drama is to acquaint the student with the fundamental structure of drama—to teach the student to deal with drama not merely as literary history or the history of ideas or the expression of the author's personality, but as *drama*, a special form with methods and characteristics of its own, (2) such teaching can best be done by intensive analysis of concrete examples; and (3) the examples may be most profitably studied when arranged in a scale of ascending difficulty. This book, therefore, is primarily a manual for reading drama, with the essentially modest aim that such a term connotes, though also with all the importance, the editors hasten to add, that the richest and fullest definition of *reading* must imply.

Whether or not the book succeeds in bodying forth the principles which have guided the editors, the teacher will have, of course, to determine for himself. But as to the validity of the principles themselves, the editors have absolute conviction. Indeed, insofar as they have failed to implement the principles, they rely upon the teacher to make good their failure, for they are under no illusion that even the best textbook can ever substitute for the teacher. The utmost that the editors of such a textbook as this may hope is that they have provided a successful instrument for the teacher, or one flexibly adapted to his use It is in such a spirit that they make the following notes upon the plan of the book

The book is divided into sections which carry the student from rather simple problems to increasingly complex ones. The plays are, therefore arranged in a scheme of ascending difficulty, though in Part One ther is a definite exception: *Lady Windermere's Fan* is obviously a more co plex play than those which follow it in Part Two Yet we feel that exception can be justified - that the task of defining drama for the stud (the especial problem of Part One) can best be completed by placing be the student as an initial example a play which is rather fully devel and which is likely to be more interesting to him than a more prim or "simple" example of the genre Relatively simple plays, howeve met with in Part Two, and plays that involve more special or mo cult problems are relegated to the latter part of the book.

For most of the plays, comments and questions are inserted end of each act- this novel arrangement should provide a special to careful and intensive reading. But teachers who so prefer m have the play in question read first as a whole and may take u by-act analysis only after the student has made a rapid over-all the play. Each method has its own advantages

As for the commentaries themselves, the editors naturally hope that these will appear basically sound to most teachers; but the commentaries are certainly not meant to be prescriptive or to render the teacher's own comments superfluous. They offer *a* reading of the play, but this does not purport to be *the* reading. It is quite possible, indeed, that the commentaries may best serve a pedagogical purpose by furnishing the teacher with an account of the play to be attacked or modified or discarded, or by stimulating the student to make an interpretation of his own. Yet the editors do have some confidence that the commentaries, even when taken at the lowest discount, do raise central questions which need to be raised with regard to drama in general and with regard to the plays here represented in particular.

For the use of classes whose teachers wish them to do more extensive reading (and who have time for such reading), questions and exercises on additional plays are provided in Appendix A. Most of these plays are readily accessible in various popular collections (notice of where they may be found is given in footnotes); suggestions for integrating them with the scheme of plays printed in the text are also given in Appendix A, though the teacher will naturally make his own disposition of the additional plays. The exercises provide in particular opportunities for special papers and reports which may demonstrate how well the student has absorbed the intensive reading methods proposed by the treatment of the plays printed in the body of the text.

An alphabetically arranged Glossary should make it easier for the student to master the basic critical terms which any discussion of the drama requires. As an additional feature the Glossary has been split into two parts: the second is the conventional lexicon, but the first, providing fuller discussion under a few major headings, gives a coherent summary account of the basic structural characteristics of drama. Though this volume does not purport to be a guide to play-writing, it is possible that Part I of the Glossary, taken along with the analyses in the body of the book, may be useful to students interested in the writing of plays.

We have remarked that the first consideration of this manual has been the problem of reading drama with appreciation and understanding. But the editors do not intend to discount the claims of literary history. Much of the historical material, of course, will be provided by the teacher, and some teachers will wish to supplement this manual with readings in the history of the drama. Teachers who wish to stress the historical approach will find a succinct account of the history of the drama in Appendix B. Moreover, the plays printed and analyzed in this book, though chosen primarily to illustrate various dramatic modes and problems, do provide a rather full representation of the major developments in dramatic history.

Instructors and students should note the dual system of line-numbering. In plays which are in verse-form or largely in verse-form (*Everyman*, *Henry IV, Part I*) and in the prologues and epilogues written in verse, the lines are numbered consecutively; in prose plays, the line-numbering is by pages,

and the numbers are in the middle space on the page. When the latter system of numbering is used, references to specific passages give first the page-number, then the column (*a* for left, *b* for right), then the line-number. Thus "p. 124a, 25-30" means "page 124, left-hand column, lines 25 to 30."

The index provides some guide not only to the subjects discussed recurrently throughout the book but also to plays, dramatists, and other literary works and figures mentioned briefly in the discussions.

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April 15, 1945

PART ONE



PROBLEMS
of the
DRAMA

1. *Dialogue and Action*

A BOOK about the drama should perhaps begin with a definition of the drama. But in one sense the book could only end with such a definition: only by careful examination of various plays can we really understand the drama. Of course, there is another sense in which drama does not seem at all difficult to define, for some of its characteristics are easily recognized by everybody. On the obvious level its distinctions from prose, fictional or non-fictional, are as sharp as those of poetry. Everyone knows that in drama there is little or no place for "description" or for other comment made directly by the author; that the work consists almost entirely of words spoken directly by the characters, that is, of dialogue, that the work can be read or that it can be seen in the form of stage-presentation, that plays are often written in verse-form

1. TYPES OF DIALOGUE

Of these generally familiar facts, the dialogue-form is to most people probably the distinguishing characteristic. At a superficial glance, it seems that a play consists, except for some stage directions, of conversation— people talking to each other directly— and that when this goes on lon enough, we have a play. But have we? To answer that question, we need t do some looking into the nature of dialogue, and to try to see just wh goes on there. Let us take first a sample of the interchange of question a answer which we find in a court-trial We have all seen newspaper rep ductions of such "dialogues", in their printed form they do not look mu different from the text of a play, for the trimmings that we find in fict are all gone, and spoken words are the essence of the matter

Courtroom Dialogue. In the trial in which the following actual dial took place, the physician (Dr Armbruster) of a murdered man (Sir H Laurel) is being questioned by the Defense Attorney (Fermor Biggs)

"Was blood from the wounds on Laurel's head stopped or flowing whe examined the body?" Biggs asked

"Stopped," the doctor replied

"What was the condition of Sir Henry's face? Was it bloody?"

"There was a small clot of dry blood on the nostril and upper l— Ther have been a little oozing from a wound, but I am not sure."

Biggs handed Armbruster a photograph of the body showing a streak of blood across the face.

"The body must have been moved," the physician stated emphatically. "Blood will not flow uphill out of the ear and nostrils."

Jury Foreman Jacob Stone interrupted the questioning to ask the doctor if there was any indication of the body being lifted.

"I did not examine it sufficiently to answer that question," Armbruster replied.

"Would you say that the burns you saw would have prevented Sir Henry from moving from the bed?" the juror continued.

"No, Sir Henry would have been capable of moving if the burns preceded the blows."

"Did he move after the blows?" Stone asked.

"In my opinion, Sir Henry did not move himself after the blows were struck," the doctor added.

Justice Sir Claude Weeks asked, "How long would it have taken a normal, healthy person to die then?"

"A normal, healthy person does not die," Armbruster responded candidly. The courtroom roared with laughter, including the white-wigged, red-robed Weeks.

As far as superficial matters are concerned, only a slight change or two would be necessary to arrange these lines as they would appear in a play. Instead of "Biggs asked" and "the doctor replied" we would find the names preceding the speeches. For the fifth paragraph, which describes the use of the photograph, there could be an extra line to this effect: "Take a look at this photograph of the body. You see that streak of blood across the face. What do you make of that?" Adverbs such as "emphatically" could be used as a part of stage directions, or alternatively, the emphasis could be indicated by changes in the present wording. Foreman Stone's interruption is obviously an interruption, and what he says could easily be a direct quotation. And so on.

Now from this it may appear that the composition of a play, or of dramatic dialogue, may be merely the product of a rearrangement of a series of speeches and actions into the form of direct discourse. But clearly this is not true. The excerpt from the report of the Laurel trial is obviously not drama at all. It may convey a certain excitement and even exhibit a mild tension—qualities which one expects of true drama, but still it is not drama. This fact, anyone can realize. But why is this true?

Is it not that the purpose of this passage is wholly different from any purpose which we could imagine drama to have? The purpose of the interchange is to *secure factual information,* whereas the securing or the giving of factual information is not the function of drama or any other literary form. This kind of exchange of lines could go on for three hundred pages, and we would still be essentially just where we had started. We would have a few more facts about a murder, but nothing more. Note that among the things not done by such a dialogue is the portrayal of *character*. Such questions and answers could go on indefinitely, and we would still know practically nothing about the attorney, the jurymen, the judge, or the witnesses. The bringing forth of great quantities of factual information

[illegible] give us some ground for inferences, but we would not really [illegible]
in a mere chronological order; and what goes into it must be determined by some more significant purpose than the discovery and clarification of a [illegible]
more significant matters than in the account of the murder-trial.

The "Conversation." The following selection is from a type of work which the author himself, W. S. Landor, designated by the term *Conversation*. The date of this imaginary conversation is the seventeenth century; the participants are Bossuet, a famous bishop, and the Duchess de Fontanges, mistress of Louis XIV:

Bossuet: Mademoiselle, it is the King's desire that I compliment you on the elevation you have attained.

Fontanges: O monseigneur, I know very well what you mean. His Majesty is kind and polite to everybody. The last thing he said to me was, "Angélique! do not forget to compliment Monseigneur the Bishop on the dignity I have conferred upon him, of almoner to the Dauphiness. I desired the appointment for him only that he might be of rank sufficient to confess you, now you are Duchess Let him be your confessor, my little girl He has fine manners."

B.: I dare not presume to ask you, mademoiselle, what was your gracious reply to the condescension of our royal master

F.: Oh! yes, you may! I told him I was almost sure I should be ashamed of confessing such naughty things to a person of high rank, who writes like an angel.

B.: The observation was inspired, mademoiselle, by your goodness and modesty.

F.: You are so agreeable a man, monseigneur, I will confess to you directly, if you like

B.: Have you brought yourself to a proper frame of mind, young lady?

F.: What is that?

B.: Do you hate sin?

F.: Very much.

B.: Are you resolved to leave it off?

F.: I have left it off entirely since the King began to love me. I have never said a spiteful word of anybody since.

B.: In [illegible]

[illegible]

B.: Vain, idle talk! Did you listen to it?

F.: Indeed I did, with both ears; it seemed so funny.

B.: You have something to answer for, then.

F.: No, indeed. I have [illegible] d many times after them and [illegible]

B. [illegible]

F.: Oh, no, no! but I wanted to see whether they were in earnest, or told me fibs; for, if they told me fibs I would never trust them again. I do not care about them; for the King told me I was only to mind *him*.

B.: Lowest and highest, we all owe to his Majesty our duty and submission.

F.: I am sure he has mine; so you need not blame me or question me on that. At first, indeed, when he entered the folding-doors, I was in such a flurry I could hear my heart beat across the chamber; by degrees I cared little about the matter; and at last, when I grew used to it, I liked it rather than not. Now, if this is not confession, what is?

B.: We must abstract the soul from every low mundane thought. Do you hate the world, mademoiselle?

F.: A good deal of it; all Picardy, for example, and all Sologne; nothing is uglier—and, oh, my life! What frightful men and women!

B.: I would say, in plain language, do you hate the flesh and the Devil?

F.: Who does not hate the Devil? If you will hold my hand the while, I will tell him so.—I hate you, beast! There now. As for flesh, I never could bear a fat man. Such people can neither dance nor hunt, nor do anything that I know of.

B.: Mademoiselle Marie-Angélique de Scoraille de Rousille, Duchess de Fontanges! do you hate titles and dignities and yourself?

F.: Myself! does anyone hate me? Why should I be the first? Hatred is the worst thing in the world: it makes one so very ugly.

B.: To love God, we must hate ourselves. We must detest our bodies, if we would save our souls.

F.: That is hard; how can I do it? I see nothing so detestable in mine! Do you? To love is easier . . .

F.: . . . And now let me tell you, my lord, you compose such pretty funeral sermons, I hope I shall have the pleasure of hearing you preach mine . . .

B.: To me the painful duty will, I trust, be spared: I am advanced in age; you are a child.

F.: Oh, no! I am seventeen.

B.: I should have supposed you younger by two years at least . . .

As in the previous quotations from the murder-trial record, a considerable part of this Conversation depends upon questions. But note the difference between the trial witness's answers and the Duchess's answers: every word the latter speaks gives some clue to her character, so that, by the end of even the short section here reprinted, we have a pretty clear notion of what sort of person she is. She is naive, with both the advantages and the disadvantages of naiveté: on the one hand, she is completely candid and without hypocrisy, and her pleasure in her own charms is a long way from adult vanity; on the other hand, her simplicity is such that she misses the real point of all the questions. She is well-meaning but tactless; she jumps to conclusions; she is completely literal-minded. She is unable to understand such simple and well-known figures of speech as "the world," "the flesh," and "the devil"; she has had, so to speak, no literary training or experience. Note, further, that as we read we also get some impression of the Bishop's character. In part he is the conventional clergyman; his pastoral inquiries and comments are mostly predetermined. But there is also some individualization: the almost exaggerated humility of the references to the king, the

exasperation of tone in such phrases as "Vain, idle talk!" And above all he is a master of irony, as we see especially in his final remark about the Duchess's age.

So we see two characters developing before us, and since they are quite different, the contrast, we may say, is "dramatic"; that is, there is more "tension" than if the bishop were speaking to a conventional, devout adult. And now observe the way in which Landor complicates this contrast somewhat, that is, tries to keep it from being too simple and obvious, by having the Duchess tell about her "checking up" on the men who said that they would die for her. In her way, we see, she is *somewhat of a moralist* too; she is just a little more than the beautiful and stupid mistress of the king. This union of apparently contradictory qualities, this complexity, makes her a more complete and plausible character, not unlike one we might find in a good play or story.

Further, we may note that Landor is not quite content with mere conversation; at one place physical action is clearly implied. The Duchess will tell the devil she hates him if the Bishop will hold her hand. Then, "I hate you, beast! There now." This is just what is seen in plays: the meaning of the spoken lines is constantly supplemented by physical action.

Finally, we may note that, to use a phrase often found in literary study, the contrast of the two characters "says something." Behind the contrast of characters is a further contrast—we might even call it a philosophical one—between two ways of life: the contrast between devotion to a heavenly master and devotion to an earthly master. Yet even here we find a compli- [illegible] yet sticks closely [illegible] inconsistent. The [illegible] e notice, is qualified by his devotion to an earthly master. So we get some sense of the conflicting claims to which man is subject and thus of the basic complexity of experience.

The Difference Between the "Conversation" and Drama. We have, then, the presentation of character, with some complexity in the characters; the dramatic contrast of characters; some implied physical action, such as we might see on the stage; and, behind it all, an implied commentary on the nature of human experience. In every one of these respects, Landor's Conversation is like drama. Yet it clearly is not drama; no one is likely to mistake it for a scene in a play. Why?

1. There is no "plot," no real action taking place. The scene displays the characters, but we do not see them in action. The relationship between the Bishop and the Duchess is only casual and formal; it is the product of a purely external matter, the king's wish. It is not organic; it is not the product of a situation in which both are involved. There is no development or change in character; no decisions are being made; no action will result from the interview. No situation is created which must develop to a logical conclusion. The future conduct and lives of the participants will be fundamentally unaffected by the interview, whereas in good drama each scene

has some definite influence or relation to what happens subsequently. Otherwise, a good dramatist would throw it out as "uneconomical." But this conversation exists for its own sake; it shows the characters for a minute, and that is all. Think how different the situation would be if the bishop were trying to persuade the duchess to leave the king or to use her influence to get the king to favor some duke or to deprive a count of an appointment. We would then look forward to the outcome of the situation; whereas here there is strictly speaking no "outcome" at all.

2. The Conversation does not have the directness and continuity which it would have as part of a play. It does have "form," of course; the formal series of questions partly determines its structure. But the structure is also influenced by the nature of conversation itself, by its tendency to go from subject to subject by association rather than by logic. For instance, the question, "Do you hate the world?" would logically follow close upon "Do you hate sin?" but the mention of sin leads the duchess off into the digression about her admirers. That is precisely what everyday conversations do. But this kind of "realistic" conversational fullness Landor could hardly use in a play, where he would have to stick—or give the appearance of sticking—very close to the business of advancing the action.

So, though we have many characteristics of the drama here, we do not have drama. We do not have central action which binds the parts together, unifies them, and gives them direction. What we need to do now, therefore, is to try to see what meaningful action is and how it works.

2. THE MEANING OF ACTION

By way of a preliminary glance at "action," we may try to see it in "pure" form, that is, isolated as much as possible from the other elements in drama. In fact, we can get at it in its elementary or physical form, though we must keep in mind that "action" includes a great deal more than physical movements. But an account of the physical actions of a group of characters will at least indicate some of the difference between a conversation and a drama. What follows is part of a movie script, and here, you will observe, we can see action reduced to the bare skeleton—indeed, to a sort of blueprint for action.

SHOOTING-SCRIPT FOR *THE GREAT McGINTY**

The last title is imposed over a NIGHT SHOT of a drinking establishment. Now we HEAR some rumba music and we TRUCK FORWARD SLOWLY TOWARD THE CAFÉ . . .

DISSOLVE TO:

A PRETTY RUMBA DANCER PERFORMING IN FRONT OF A BAND

We see a few customers IN THE FOREGROUND but they are not particularly interested. In other words, they give one look then turn away. Noticing the lack of interest she bends over and grabs her skirt.

* From Arthur Mizener's "Our Elizabethan Movies," *Kenyon Review*, 1942. By permission of the author and publisher.

CUT TO:

THE RUMBA DANCER FROM WAIST DOWN

Slowly she starts to pull up her skirt. The CAMERA follows her

CUT TO:

LOW CAMERA SHOT UP AT THE TABLE OF MEN

They are not paying any attention. One of them is lighting a pipe. As he turns his head away to escape the cloud of smoke his eye catches the legs on the floor. There is a slight double-take, then he gives the legs his undivided attention A second later the other men at the table follow his gaze. Now the whole table looks on stonily. In the BACKGROUND we see McGinty working at the bar but he is OUT OF FOCUS.

CUT TO

THE GIRL'S LEGS AS SHE DANCES

CUT TO:

THE GIRL'S UPPER HALF

She looks around and is amused at the effect her legs are having.

This is pure action (or at least action about as pure as we shall ever get). It is not very dramatic. True, it would not be fair to say that *it is meaningless*, that it does not express something. It does: but as *action* it expresses very little; and even as acted out by a competent actress whose gesture and facial expression might conceivably add a good deal to the meaning of the scene, the "meaning" of the scene is blurred and vague. Obviously, *this is* a typical cheap café, on, so far as we can tell, a typical night. But we do not know enough about the characters—about the men at the table, or about the pretty rumba dancer—for the scene to have *much more* than the meaning which any "slice of life" would give us. Even a very competent actress, limited as here to mere gesture and facial expression, could not tell us much about what is going on in the pretty rumba dancer's mind. What the script thus far gives us is *pantomime*—a very old art and for certain types of material highly expressive, but an art which, deprived as *it is of the use* of words, can get at the inner life of its characters only very *indirectly*.

The Script and the Completed Movie. But, of course, as will have already occurred to the reader, it is hardly fair to take the shooting script of the movie in this kind of literal fashion. After all, the shooting script is only a set of directions [illegible] *the director will add here is a kind of commentary*, a kind of interpretation which, even though it does not make use of words, still is an interpretation over and above the "pure action" we have already considered.

Mr. Arthur Mizener has indicated some of the things which the movie camera will do to transform the recipe-for-action of the script into the meaningful completed picture. Let us reread the last lines of the section of

shooting script quoted above, and then go on with his comments on what the camera is doing:

CUT TO:

THE GIRL'S UPPER HALF

She looks around and is amused at the effect her legs are having.

"Once more the camera," comments Mr. Mizener, "apparently about its simple narrative business, is unobtrusively stressing certain implications. It picks out and isolates the girl's legs, the only part of her that exists for the men at the table, and then cuts to the girl's face, as if to contrast the human intelligence, which does not exist for these men, with the legs which so emphatically do. The girl's amusement is a comment, not so much on the men's attitude, as on the ludicrousness of the whole situation."

In other words, the camera by arranging the "action" for us, by directing our attention, first to one detail, then to another, by suggesting contrasts, by repeating a detail for emphasis or by repeating it with a significant variation is actually suggesting to us how we are to "take the scene"—is suggesting to us what the scene "means." Words are not being used to do this, it is true, but it ought to be abundantly evident that we are not getting mere "action" either. The camera is sifting the material and arranging it for us in a meaningful pattern. It is making an interpretation of the scene.

Actually, the scene in question becomes, as the movie develops, even further removed from "raw" action. The McGinty who, as the script tells us, is to be shown working behind the bar, has gone up very far in the world. He has been gradually pushed up the political ladder by the Boss's machine, until he has been actually elected governor of the state. But there is a political fiasco. The Great McGinty, the Boss, the Politician, and the Boss's Bodyguard barely escape to a banana republic. Now the Great McGinty has a job, perhaps somewhat more appropriate to his talents, behind the bar in the "drinking establishment" where the scene we have already discussed opens.

The story of McGinty's rise and fall is told in flashback. The section of the shooting script which we have read introduces McGinty and the rumba dancer. The next shots pick up the other characters who will be important in the story.

TRUCKING SHOT—PAST THE TABLES AT RINGSIDE

The CAMERA represents the girl's eyes and sees what she sees as she dances by. In this way we pass the rest of the ringside tables, with all the occupants looking down under us. Be sure to have some bald heads here. The heads turn slowly as we pass. A waiter is circulating between the tables serving drinks but we do not see his face. [This waiter turns out to be The Politician.] The last table we see is back a little from the dance floor. Here seven men are playing poker. With their BACKS TO US and unrecognizable, are the Boss and Dr. Jarvis, the latter in a green eyeshade. Directly across the table in a strong light is a pale drunken young American, Thompson. [It is to Thompson and the rumba dancer that McGinty tells

the main story.] Two American and two Spanish types complete the game. Behind Thompson stands Louie twiddling a toothpick. The top of the frame cuts him off [illegible] as we follow them through the main story, until the picture returns to this shot again at its close, and the two impressions of the characters merge. Furthermore, everything in this sequence is being used to set the tone, the slightly cynical, very amused attitude of the picture to its story. Our attitude toward the rumba dancer and her audience is our attitude toward the political world of the main story; we have seen The Boss, The Reformer, The Politician and The Bodyguard doing what they have always done, but now without hypocrisy, in a natural and fitting atmosphere. Best of all, perhaps, we have seen the shrewd, friendly, essentially simple McGinty at a job which is in itself almost a definition of his character."

The scene, then, properly understood, becomes, as the moving picture develops, a commentary on McGinty and the other characters. The cheap café is their natural haunt: McGinty is "naturally" a better bartender than he is a governor, and the political crash which has sent him behind the bar in this cheap cafe has put him where he will really be more comfortable—more thoroughly at home.

Action and Character. Action, then, apart from its reference to character is relatively meaningless. This wordless opening scene from the movie—even though it is wordless—does not violate the principle. Action, even violent and exciting action, unless it becomes the action of concrete characters, soon becomes tiresome. Not even the Western picture or the murder mystery is able to get by without a certain minimum of character. We are, as human beings, simply not able to get interested in the murder of one cipher by another. Nor are we interested in mere summaries of action. It is not enough to know that McGinty, for example, fell from the job of governor to that of bartender. If it were, the movie's first scene (which, we are told, is the same as the last) would be enough.

If it is true, then, that physical action can become dramatic only as it becomes meaningful, we shall have little difficulty in seeing why dialogue is of tremendous importance in drama. For language is perhaps our richest and most subtle means of significant expression. Gesture, though it goes hand and hand with dramatic dialogue—even the Landor Conversation demands gesture when the duchess takes the bishop's hand—gesture is highly limited. In the first place, the more subtle aspects of facial expression, for example, tend to be lost on most of the audience, who sit too far back from the stage to be able to see it clearly.

By means of the "close-up," it is true, movies may more or less overcome this particular handicap. And Mr. Mizener's comments on the script of

The Great McGinty have suggested some of the other special resources which the cinema has at its disposal. This is not the place to go into a thoroughgoing discussion of the differences between the cinema and the drama proper. It is possible that one should distinguish between the "cinematic" and the "dramatic" effect; it is also possible to argue that any art becomes most thoroughly an art when it is content to exploit its own special resources, and, therefore, argue further that the cinema is primarily a *visual* not an *auditory* art.

But regardless of whether the movies should make much or little use of dialogue, there can be no question that the legitimate drama is primarily an auditory art, and that the dialogue is its primary element. For drama, therefore, costumes, setting, and even acting itself are, finally, secondary. It is the word which is primary here; and this fact may explain why a good play retains so much of its dramatic power even when merely read in the study or the classroom.

The Relation of Dialogue to Action. But though dialogue is primary in drama, the dialogue must, of course, be of a certain kind. In the courtroom dialogue which we first examined, we have dialogue which is definitely not dramatic, even though it concerns action, and violent action at that. The questions in that dialogue are concerned with eliciting information, with establishing what happened. *They have to do with the past;* they are determined by the nature of past events. The only audience at which they are aimed is the jury.

In the Landor Conversation, the questions are not concerned with the past at all, for here there is no past. They are meant to lead the duchess to self-examination and thus to give the reader a sense of her character and of the differences between her character and the bishop's. Everything is *in the present.* In drama, on the other hand, the questions may elicit information about the past, and will certainly illustrate present character. But, primarily, they are concerned with the future; that is they are meant to be a *stimulus to further action.* In a play, every scene except the last is looking ahead: the play must be progressive.

The action develops and moves forward—however, it moves forward, not placidly, but with a sense of strain and conflict. There is struggle; forces come into collision; decisions are made. The action is not only meaningful action; it has the tensions of active conflict within it.

There is a sense, of course, in which all literature involves a certain amount of conflict. Yet, drama tends to accentuate conflict. And the fact that it does so often emphasize conflict is in accord with its special potentialities. As we shall see a little later, drama, compared with some of the other arts, is limited in its ability to change scene, in its ability to show the slow development of character, in its ability to show us a character from as many points of view as, say, a novel can. But it can deal powerfully with characters in conflict: problems do come to a head at a particular time; conflicts occur in a particular place; and if the dramatist posts us there, he can display to us with maximum immediacy and power the final struggle itself.

2. *Drama and Other Literary Forms*

I [illegible]
to all kinds of [illegible]

quite different from these forms. It may therefore be well to observe in a little more detail just what characteristics the drama shares with other literary forms. We will then be ready to see precisely wherein it differs from them and how it goes about meeting its own particular problems.

1. DRAMA AND FICTION

One way to do this is to examine a specific story and a specific poem and see how they resemble, and how they differ from, drama. Let us take the story first.

A SUM IN ADDITION*

William March

Collins said: "Sure there's a corkscrew in there. You'll find it chained to the wall All hotels have 'em" And Menefee answered from the bathroom: "Well, there's not one in *here*. Look for yourselves if you boys don't believe me."

[illegible] 'll write and complain [illegible] ll look in the closet," [illegible]

Menefee came back into the room and put the unopened bottle on the dresser, his head drawn backward and turned at an angle, his eyes squinting up He ground out the cigarette that had been burning between his relaxed lips. "You boys keep your pants on," he said; "I'll go down and borrow a corkscrew off a bellhop." He put on his coat and went into the hall, closing the door behind him.

Collins sat back and rested his legs on the vacant chair, looking lazily over his shoulder at Red Smith. Red was pulling out drawers noisily, or standing tiptoe to peer at shelves just above his head. Then he stopped, picked up something and came into the room with it. It was a sheet of hotel stationery covered with writing and it had been crumpled into a ball and thrown into the closet.

Red opened the sheet and smoothed it flat, and when he had read it, he passed it to Collins, a peculiar look on his face. "Read this, Wade," he said

* From *Some Like Them Short* by William March. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company.

Collins read slowly, the paper held close to his eyes. At the right of the sheet, and commencing it, was the following entry: "Cash on hand $17.45."

Then, to the left, were the following entries:

Expenses babyies funerel (about)	$148.00
Wifes hospital bill (about)	65.00
Owe to grocery store	28.17
Back Rent (2 mo.—make it 3)	127.25
Incidentals	25.00
	$394.42

A little farther down the paper were the following words: "Will borrow four hundred dollars from Mr. Sellwood." This sentence was repeated, like an exercise in penmanship, over and over, until the paper was filled with it. At first the words were written boldly, heavily, and there were places where the pen had broken through the paper behind the determination of the writer; but as the writing progressed, the man seemed less sure of himself, as if his courage and his certainty were fading away. The sentences were more perfect here, with an occasional mended letter; they were written more slowly, as if each letter were pondered. The last sentence was not finished at all. It dwindled thinly into wavering illegibility.

Collins had read the thing through and sat with it in his hands. He said sympathetically: "Tough! Tough!" then added: "He knew he couldn't work it out. He knew he was fooling himself; so he crumpled up the paper and threw it in the closet."

Red Smith sat down, resting his elbows on his knees, his bright, coppery hair shining in the light. Suddenly he had a picture of a shabby little man sitting in this same cheap hotel room, going over his problem, over and over, and finding no answer to it. Finally he said: "Don't you suppose Mr. Sellwood let him have the four hundred bucks after all? Why not?"

Collins sighed, the masonic emblem resting on his fat stomach, rising with his breath. He spoke mockingly: "Of course not, Little Sunshine. Of course not! Maybe our friend went to *see* Mr. Sellwood all right, but Mr. Sellwood said that times were hard right then and he had a lot of expenses of his own. I guess that's about the way it worked out."

Red lifted his alert face. "I think you're wrong, Wade, I think everything worked out all right."

But Collins shook his head. "Not a chance, young fellow!" he said. "Not a chance!"

Red replied: "Just the same, I think Mr. Sellwood let him have the four hundred bucks. He was an old friend of the family, you see. Then he got a good job for this fellow that paid more money, and this fellow came back home almost running. He came up the steps three at the time to tell his wife. Everything worked out fine for them after that."

"Maybe he met Santa Claus on the way home," said Wade heavily, "and old Santa slipped the money in his stocking." Then he said more seriously: "The fellow who wrote that is sitting in some other cheap hotel tonight still figuring, and still trying to find an answer, but he won't, because there isn't any answer for him to find."

The door opened then and Menefee stood before them, a corkscrew in his hand. "Everything's okay," he said. "Everything's all set."

"We'll leave it to Menefee," said Red Smith. "Give him the writing, Wade, and let's see what he thinks."

Collins passed over the paper and Menefee examined it carefully, as if he did not understand it, before he looked at the two men, puzzled a little.

"What's it all about? This don't make sense to me."

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Red laughed a little and said earnestly: "Don't you see the point, Menefee?" Menefee read the thing through again, turned the paper over and examined the writing once more. "I'm damned if I do," he said helplessly. Then a moment later he added triumphantly: "Oh sure, sure, I see the point now! Sure I do: It's added up wrong."

Red Smith looked at Collins and they both laughed. "It is added up wrong!" said Menefee, indignant and a little hurt. "Eight and five are thirteen and eight are twenty-one . . . seven makes twenty-eight, and five thirty-three—not thirty-four, like it is here."

But Collins and Red Smith continued to laugh and to shake their heads.

"All right," said Menefee. "I'm dumb; I admit it." He pulled in his lips and spoke in a high, quavering voice: "Come on, boys: let your poor old grandmother in on the joke!" He picked up the bottle and poured three drinks into three tumblers, grumbling a little to himself. "I never saw such superior bastards in all my life as you two are," he said.

The Method of the Story. This story turns upon a rather simple contrast: ... evening of a group of salesmen in a cheap hotel tumbles ... of a group of ... expenses of some poor devil who ... i ... the bills incurred by ... the contrast bet... salesmen, between ... e pends largely upon contrasts: the contrast ... the relative well-being of the salesmen, between the earlier occupant and the relative well-being of theirs, between the desperation of his evening and the casual gaiety of theirs, between the indifference which we may expect of them and the actual sympathy which ... the different reponses to and understandings of the the ... evening rot ... spent by ... e them is more than that of place. There ... another contrast, for the ...

But the sympathy itself involves another contrast, for the ... personal regard not particularly likely sources of sympathy. They have no personal regard for the former occupant; they do not even know him. And, hunting for a corkscrew in order to have drinks, they do not seem likely to be sensitive to the "still sad music of humanity."

By using contrast, the author gives the impression of being restrained and *objective*. He uses no device to help pump up sympathy. He lets the pathetic document speak for itself, he does not "play up" the pathos by choosing especially sensitive characters or a setting (a Christmas Eve scene, for instance) designed to catch the reader on his softer side. Hence the effect of the paper on the characters seems plausible, and we are induced to respond in like manner. In this connection, notice the author's use of Menefee, who is honestly puzzled by the note and can see nothing in it but a mistake in

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The Method of the Story. This story turns upon a rather simple contrast: into the humdrum evening of a group of salesmen in a cheap hotel tumbles a bit of pure pathos—the itemized list of expenses of some poor devil who had spent an evening in the same room trying to figure out a way of paying the bills incurred by his wife's illness and his baby's death. The story depends largely upon contrasts: the contrast between the misfortunes of the earlier occupant and the relative well-being of the salesmen, between the desperation of his evening and the casual gaiety of theirs, between the indifference which we may expect of them and the actual sympathy which they show, between the different reponses to and understandings of the note.

The same hotel room is the scene of two totally different types of evening spent by people in wholly different circumstances. Yet the link between them is more than that of place: there is also a certain amount of sympathy. But the sympathy itself involves another contrast, for the salesmen are not particularly likely sources of sympathy. They have no personal regard for the former occupant; they do not even know him. And, hunting for a corkscrew in order to have drinks, they do not seem likely to be sensitive to the "still sad music of humanity."

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addition. The contrast between him and the other men is very important in creating the final effect of the story. For one thing, this contrast reinforces the objectivity of the story in that it serves further to avoid any impression that pathos is being artificially played up. That is, some people, like Menefee, simply don't have the understanding necessary for sympathy. Then his lack of understanding leads to the amusement of the others and to his irritation at their amusement: thus the author ends the story not on a note of sadness but on one of ironic amusement. He does not try to wring the last drop of pity from the situation; instead he returns the salesmen to the normal world of talk and banter. The sense of pity is gone. The characters are ordinary men, and they are not made to act in an extraordinary fashion.

Further, Menefee's lack of comprehension reinforces the ironic point of the story. Menefee does not think of himself as a callous man, nor do his friends regard him as callous. He would probably be affected by grief before his eyes, grief touching someone that he knew. But, like the Duchess de Fontanges in Landor's Conversation, he simple lacks the imagination necessary to grasp a case that is not close to home.

Through him, then, we get a glimpse of the world with which the writer of the note must struggle: not an essentially hard-hearted or cruel world, but a world too busy, too obsessed with its own concerns to be able to participate imaginatively in the plight of others. The author has already skillfully prepared us for this conclusion by presenting us with Collins's view of Mr. Sellwood as a possible helper of the note-writer. In both cases the stress is not on hardness and unfeelingness. Menefee can honestly see only the mistake in addition: ironically, he knows what it "adds up to" as far as the figures are concerned, but not in any more significant way. He habitually reads the world in terms of figures. But whatever the motive, the fact is that he—and the world—are still callous. We have a final sense of hopelessness because we realize that the callousness springs not from calculated cruelty but from the inability of human beings to break through their ordinary habits.

The Story as Drama. So much for the story itself. Now of what use is it in understanding drama? In many ways it is very much like drama: the method is *objective* (that is, the author refrains from comment on the situation), the effect depends upon *sharp contrasts*, there is very *little description*, and the situation is advanced almost entirely by *dialogue*. And, in addition to these matters which we have already seen, the story uses one important technical device in the same way that drama does. Menefee's failure to understand the paper, we have seen, really points the effect of the story. Now the story "*builds up to*" *this effect* just as a play might do it, for about a third of the story is spent on the other two men's talking about the paper before Menefee sees it. The author "holds" this part of the story because it establishes our attitude to the note and thus prepares for the shock caused by Menefee's incomprehension. This arrangement of materials is very important for the effect.

Now obviously the preparatory discussion of the note has to take place when Menefee is out of the room, and Menefee must be got out of the room—not in a forced or unnatural way but by a well "motivated" departure (later we shall discuss motivation at length). This is an ever-present problem in drama. Menefee goes for a corkscrew, and his departure seems perfectly plausible. But the plausibility is not an accident. March makes the departure seem logical by opening the story with a search for the corkscrew, and thus prevents the search from seeming an awkward afterthought, an expedient dragged in after the main business has been introduced. And the paper with the expenses, instead of being a starting point, also comes in very smoothly as a product of the hunt for the corkscrew. This very skillful management of materials shows exactly what the dramatist must do in articulating the parts of his play.

Hence this story might seem easily convertible into a play: we could have a single scene in a hotel room, and the three characters could speak most of the lines almost as they are given in the story, with Menefee going out and returning at the proper time. There would be no serious mechanical problems. But we would soon be aware that something was missing, that the dramatic version was a good deal less effective than the story version. Now, if we can see how a story so like drama still does not work very well as drama, we have taken the major step toward understanding the problems peculiar to drama.

The Difference Between Story and Play. In the first place, the story has very little "action"; what goes on consists almost entirely of the comments of the characters on a situation. Not much happens overtly. The characters talk about a situation instead of participating in it; they are not really influenced by it, and so what we have is a kind of photographic glimpse of static characters. The story is in this respect not unlike Landor's Conversation: characters are exhibited, and a general commentary on human experience is implied. But, in general, drama apparently works with greater success when characters act out a situation themselves instead of merely viewing it, even though they be very diverse and significant spectators.

Second, we should have to leave out one of the most important "characters" of all—the crumpled sheet of paper. Of course, the characters could tell us about it, but this second-hand presentation would deprive it of almost all vitality, besides being extremely awkward. The illiterate spelling [illegible]

boldly and heavily, then less confidently, and finally in its last form was left unfinished. The sentence, "It dwindled thinly into wavering illegibility," a detail which suggests so eloquently the writer's final despair, we should have to forego entirely. One of the men could describe this, but we would then see it through him rather than directly. Further, it would have to be a cruder description, for the author's neatness and precision would

be out of character in the men. Yet this one piece of economical literary expression is very useful in a story made up mostly of the colloquial dialogue of rather unpolished people.

Third, we should have to leave out—or else present very awkwardly in Red's words—the insight into Red's mind which the author uses: "Suddenly he had a picture of a shabby little man in this same cheap hotel, going over his problem, over and over, and finding no answer to it." The loss might not be fatal, but the omission of the passage, which establishes the concrete form of Red's imaginative sympathy with the man, might reduce the plausibleness of the sympathy. This passage shows what the omniscient author can do that a dramatist cannot do: give a direct, immediate account of mental operations.

In summary, we may observe that the second and third points are really amplifications of the first: because of what it cannot do, drama demands a more overt form of action. The ability of fiction to describe setting and properties of all kinds, to look both at the outer world of things and the inner world of the mind, to shift easily from present to past, means that it has a variety of resources with which to take an apparently slight or trivial situation and extend it, as it were, into a much fuller and richer meaning. It can take a difference of attitude which appears only at the level of casual conversation (*A Sum in Addition*) and give it dramatic substance. Lacking all these devices, drama must present the difference of attitude in an actual clash of character, where the words are not merely descriptive but are accompaniments of action or indications of action to come.

Another Story. Now take another kind of story, de Maupassant's *A Piece of String*, which can easily be made available for the student on the reserve shelf. It has more "action," but it presents still greater difficulties than *A Sum in Addition* to the dramatist. The action is in at least ten scenes, some of them "moving," and several requiring lengthy description. First we see people on "all the roads around Goderville" and then "in the public square of Goderville." Maître Hauchecorne finds the piece of string—a most important scene—as he is "directing his steps toward the public square." Then we have street scenes, an inn scene, and a scene at the Mayor's; and "moving scenes" as Hauchecorne moves about Goderville and Breaute talking to people. In fact, up until the deathbed scene, nearly all the action is of this kind. All this would provide insuperable difficulty to the dramatist. He could not deal with the large number of scenes without greatly expanding the materials; he could not do the crowd scenes which de Maupassant describes at length to establish the psychological and ethical atmosphere; he could not show Hauchecorne traveling around and buttonholing everybody to protest his innocence—a most important part of the story. Note also how many explanations there are about what goes on in Hauchecorne's mind—all very difficult to get into dialogue form.

Here, then, are further differences between story and drama. And we can easily imagine another type of story in which there is extended com-

ment by the author or a great deal of direct psychological analysis. Obviously drama would have to attack the subjects of such stories in a completely different way. Does this mean that drama is a cruder or less effective form than fiction? Not at all. It simply means that drama is a highly specialized form of literature which can do some things supremely well but which must handle matters in its own way. As we shall see, it has some positive advantages; but perhaps we can best learn about it at the start by looking further into what it cannot do.

2. DRAMA AND POETRY

To understand further the special ways in which the drama works, we may do well to compare it with another literary form, poetry. Here, the contrast is not quite on the same footing as that between fiction and drama. For, as we shall see later, drama and poetry can be combined. We may have, as in the plays of Shakespeare, great drama which is also great poetry. Yet the comparison between the treatment of a theme in drama and the treatment of it in a lyric poem may tell us much again about the nature of dramatic statement of theme.

TO A MOUSE

On Turning Her up in Her Nest with the Plough
November, 1785

Robert Burns

1

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
  Wi' bickerin brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
  Wi' murdering pattle!

2

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
  Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion
  An' fellow mortal!

3

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!

1 *sleekit*, sleek. 4 *bickering brattle*, sudden scamper. 5. *laith to rin*, loath to run 6 *pattle*, paddle 13 *whyles*, sometimes. 14. *maun*, must.

A daimen icker in a thrave
  'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
  An' never miss 't!

4

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
  O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin
  Baith snell an' keen!

5

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
  Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
  Out thro' thy cell.

6

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
  But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
  An' cranreuch cauld!

7

But Mousie, thou are no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
  Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
  For promis'd joy!

8

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
  On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
  I guess an' fear!

The Method of the Poem. The theme of Burns's poem is closely related to that of March's story: the imaginative response to misfortune. But while in the story we have a dialogue about the misfortune, with different degrees

15. *daimen icker in a thrave*, occasional ear in a shock. 17. *lave*, rest. 21. *big a new ane*, build a new one. 22. *foggage*, grass. 24. *baith snell*, both sharp. 34. *But*, without. *hald*, dwelling. 35. *thole*, endure. 36. *cranreuch cauld*, hoar frost cold. 37. *no thy lane*, not alone. 40. *Gang aft a-gley*, go often awry.

of comprehension of it, Burns's poem takes the form of a meditation upon the misfortune. Both are dramatic: the story because of the concrete situation and the conflicts implied by and growing out of it; the poem because it also grows out of a special concrete occasion and because the meditation is addressed to the mouse. In fact, the meditation comes close to doing what Browning's dramatic monologues do, that is, introducing by implication the responses that the other character in the dialogue makes or might make. At least the plowman does imagine what goes on in the tiny creature's brain as it scampers away, and he goes on to make an apology as if the mouse actually were listening and could understand it. The apology is clearly on the whimsical side, but it is serious too, as we shall see. But first we should stress the whimsicalness or amusement of the speaker, the fact that, although he recognizes the pathos of the mouse's situation, he does not stress the pathos in a way that would produce a sentimental effect.

For one thing, the speaker's attitude is essentially intellectual: he is interested in the meaning of the situation rather than in the feeling it evokes. He does not express pity merely for the self-indulgent pleasure of feeling pity; the pity is, so to speak, merely introductory to the act of reflection. As early
immedia
if the spe
thing about remedying the mouse's situation so that he could enjoy the feeling of kindness; instead he accepts the situation as an accomplished fact, a subject for reflection. (Consider a similar device for the avoidance of sentimentality in *A Sum in Addition.*)

Second, the possible pathos is reduced by the humor of incongruity, which is very unobtrusively but clearly at work in the poem. The man addresses the tiny mouse—in part at least—as an equal. The man is represented as interfering in the life of the mouse, instead of vice versa, as is the usual view. The mouse has an "ill opinion" of the man instead of the reverse. The mouse is afraid when he need not be. This use of contradictions is a clear reversal of the sentimental, which depends upon familiar, expected responses. The author even carries his use of the incongruous into further details in the poem: the mouse has not only a house but also the human quality of "foresight." This is obviously in the mode of whimsy.

Finally we must note certain words which contribute to the effect: such words as *wee*, *beastie*, *housie*, *silly*. Three of these words are diminutives, a type of word often used with sentimental effect. But in view of the poet's objectivity—that is, his keeping his distance—and in view of his use of incongruity, these words actually contribute to the effect of humor. It is an affectionate humor, with a touch of condescension; but it is clearly not a way of stressing the "dearness" popular with sentimentalists.

If the poet were concerned only with feeling, there would not be much to do after the first stanza except repeat. But since, despite the whimsy, he has a serious comment to make, he can now go on with the development of his theme. His initial method is unusual, almost startling: he identifies him-

self with the mouse, despite the break between them. "Nature's social union" openly states the bond; the idea is reinforced at the end of stanza 2 with "me, thy poor, earth-born companion." Stanza 3 continues the theme by minimizing man's case against the mouse as a thief. Stanzas 4, 5, and 6 do two things: they present the fact that the mouse, like man, must have a house for protection against the weather; and the details make his plight concrete and real for us.

If this method seem far-fetched, it may be useful to recognize that Burns is only doing what Walt Disney has done on a much more elaborate scale with Mickey Mouse: Mickey is a mouse in form but otherwise is wholly endowed with human characteristics. He gives us a detached way of looking at ourselves, just as Burns's mouse provides the poet with a new way of looking at human experience.

The Climax. Now observe how the method is used at the climax of the poem: the final identification of man and mouse is in the possession of foresight and in the ironic experience of finding that the "best-laid schemes . . . Gang aft agley." (The imaginative success of the comparison is suggested by John Steinbeck's use of the phrase "of mice and men" as the title of a novel.) *Both* are victims. But, as we have seen, the endowment of the mouse with foresight is whimsical rather than a piece of serious psychology. For suddenly the whimsy is dropped; bare fact intervenes; the mouse, of course, does not have human foresight. "The present only touches thee." The mouse is the gainer; his absence of imagination is his comfort. Here Burns reverses his method: man and mouse change places. Earlier, man's experience was used to interpret the mouse's; now, the mouse illuminates man. The man who was formerly superior suddenly becomes worse off; he suffers, not in one, but in three dimensions—past, present, and future.

In summary, we may say that the last stanza very neatly does three things: 1. As we have seen, the note of whimsicality gives way to a deeper seriousness; 2. Attention is shifted from the mouse; to exploit the mouse further might seem forced, precious, disproportionate—and thus sentimental; 3. Attention is shifted to the man, who is the only really defined character and therefore the really important figure in the poem. The three functions work together: the seriousness of the man's situation gives point to the sympathy for the mouse and prevents the whimsy from seeming mere triviality; yet that the man's situation, the really important issue, can be presented with the partial amusement evoked by the mouse's misadventure, keeps the man's attitude to himself from seeming strained and sentimental.

The poem can be said to be *dramatic* in these ways: the emotion springs from some definite occasion; the play of thought and feeling is developed in terms of the occasion (rather than expressed in abstract terms); and the poet's attitude to the situation is carefully controlled, even involving dramatic shifts and sharp reversals (that is, it does not get out of hand, becoming sentimental, vague, or monotonous).

Exercise. Wordsworth's *Lines Written in Early Spring* is another poem written on the same theme. Is it closer to or farther from drama than *To a Mouse*?

The Poem Compared with Other Forms. Much good poetry is dramatic in the sense that Burns's is, and it is well to remember that these qualities which we call "dramatic" are important in all great literature. Yet, quite obviously, the poem differs sharply from both fiction and drama in the ways in which it gets its effects. Burns's poem has even less of overt action than March's story, and less development of character in the usual sense of the word—a point sharply outlined for us by the similarity of the themes (in each case sympathy for another being is accidentally aroused). Because the creature in the poem is not human, the point is made more emphatically, but the poet's problem is more difficult: he must so develop the mouse's situation as to make it an adequate symbol of man's. The special quality of character on which both depend is the imaginative sympathy necessary to grasp the "meaning" of the misfortune which is encountered. The story shows this sympathy in two characters and its absence in a third, who are presented largely by dialogue and with little interior monologue and little direct handling of symbols. In the poem we have only the single character who speaks almost entirely to himself; the writer works rather through the situation of the mouse, which, by close control of imagery and rhythm (which we have not analyzed here), he develops into a rich and exact symbol of the position of man in the world.

It is obvious, then, that turning the poem into a play would present much greater difficulties than dramatizing the story. For, in the accepted sense of the word, nothing "happens." The action would be so slight as to seem meaningless; it would suggest a pretentious author. The meditation—which would be the "dialogue" of the drama—would seem of too trivial origin, and hence forced and sentimental. There is "drama" in the poem—in the shifting of moods and the conflict between attitudes, but it is too *inward* to find adequate expression in the types of symbol which the drama uses. In the poem Burns gives this material a wide meaningfulness, whereas in the drama it could be saved from triviality—for it *could* be used—only by appearing as related to some more outward action. The man's meditation, for instance, might conceivably influence some decision which he was going to make. Drama and poetry are both concerned with presenting situations which will be meaningful. Poetry uses imagery, rhythm, symbols, statements, as the words of the author or of some character, spoken to himself or to someone else. Drama depends almost entirely on what people do and say to each other; meanings, thought, feelings must in the main be externalized in conduct (though the conduct need not be violent or sensational).

We have already remarked, however, that the differences between drama and poetry are in general not quite on the same level as those between drama and fiction, for actually great drama and great poetry can be united, as in the works of Shakespeare. Perhaps we can now begin to understand why this is so: in Shakespeare's great dramas the methods of poetry—a more

intense treatment of imagery, rhythm, etc., than we ordinarily find in prose—everywhere work with and support (and are supported by) the means appropriate to drama: characters acting and speaking in situations which involve intense conflict.

3. THE ELEMENTS COMMON TO DRAMA AND OTHER FORMS

We can see, in conclusion, that drama, fiction, and poetry have certain common elements, characteristics which distinguish literature from such types of writing as history, biography, philosophy. All the forms of literature, we may say, "present a situation," which stimulates the reader's imagination and thus leads him to apprehend the meaning or meanings latent in it. The situation is specific; but the significance is more extensive: it is "general." The situation is meant to elicit certain emotional responses, which the author is expected to control by means of his materials (for instance, the other men's laughing at Menefee, Burns's use of the mouse's "foresight"). The situation may be developed by contrast: we see it in Landor's Conversation, in the movie script, and in Burns's poem, and we shall shortly see it used very sharply in Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* (in fact, as contrast is intensified, developed in emotional terms, and made overt, it becomes the conflict that we especially associate with drama). In drama and story, the situation involves characters talking and acting; poetry may, and often does, use the same materials. The action may be inner or outer, physical or psychological, or a combination of both, with different effects and to fit the medium. An ingredient in the situation is setting: Burns's poem is as closely identified with a rural scene as is March's story with a hotel room and as Wilde's play is with English upperclass homes. Finally, drama and poetry use the same devices of language (imagery, etc.), and drama and story share certain technical devices: focusing the reader's attention, preparing for subsequent effects, "motivating" the occurrences which develop the situation.

4. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DRAMA AND OTHER FORMS

As we have seen, the dramatist cannot himself take a hand as can the novelist or poet. The latter two, of course, are governed by the effects they wish to produce; but the dramatist is restricted in a very special sense. For, whereas poetry *may* use characters speaking and fiction *does* use dialogue a good deal, drama can do nothing else. The author cannot intrude, unless a certain character acts as his mouthpiece; and this device is likely to be prohibitively awkward. Hence a vast amount of materials accessible to fiction and poetry are not accessible to drama.

1. There can be none of the *direct descriptions*—of persons, places, sounds, sights, smells—upon which both fiction and poetry heavily depend; the characters' speeches can do little of this without becoming strained and implausible. As we have seen, drama has no way of letting us see directly the letter so important in March's story; this is true of many other such materials. In acted drama, of course, we have costumes, settings, and "properties"; but drama as literature has no such appurtenances. The absence of a technique of description will account partly for the fact that, in general, drama is much less free than fiction in making changes in place. As a problem either of practical stage-craft or of literary technique, the presenting of a number of places is of more trouble than value. It can hardly be done unobtrusively, and if not expert, it can interfere with the central dramatic effect by distracting attention from the human conflict.*

2. There can be no *direct comments* by the author, on the meaning of an action, a situation, an expression, a gesture, and so on. If made by a character, such comments are likely to be very awkward. It would, for instance, be most difficult to get into a dialogue de Maupassant's comment on Hauchecorne: ". . . with his Norman cunning, he was quite capable of doing the thing with which he was charged." Thus one whole method of giving clues, of suggesting deeper and richer meanings, is out.

3. There can be little direct use of action that is purely mental or psychological; some direct mental probing can be done, as in Shakespeare's soliloquies, but in general this will have to be occasional and subordinate. (Eugene O'Neill has tried to circumvent this difficulty by introducing a new convention: each character speaks not only the usual lines to other characters but also speaks his own thoughts aloud, it being understood that these lines are heard only by the audience.) The drama has no convenient way of letting us see Smith's mental picture of the man in debt, which March gives in a sentence, of letting us grasp the unuttered sensations and half-reflections of Hauchecorne in *A Piece of String*, of presenting the whole substance of Burns's poem; of using the "flashbacks" by which both fiction and the movies can skillfully present, simultaneously, both present and past time. All this does not mean that drama is not concerned with psychological action, far from it. But this action must come in the outer forms of dialogue and action, and what lies behind them must in general come only by implication. Poetry can deal directly with an *inward* situation; drama requires a more perceptible kind of movement.

This catalogue of limitations (fiction, we notice, comes closer to drama as it gives up its own special prerogatives) may make drama seem only a kind of literary shortcut, leading to blunt effects and incapable of much completeness or subtlety. But it is clear that poetry and fiction, for all their greater resources, may, and often do, produce crude and ineffective

* A marked exception is the practice of the Elizabethan drama, in which the use of a great variety of scenes was common. But in the Elizabethan theatre, scenery was at a minimum, and the change of place was effected largely by the imaginations of the audience. Here one can observe the principle of the "convention of the theatre" in very extensive use. For a fuller discussion of convention, see the Glossary.

work. It is less the wealth of materials than the skill of the user that is important. In proper hands, drama can make its own way very effectively. For instance, the very fact of its limitations (in extent, in ability to cover great reaches of time and space and to include large numbers of fully developed characters) gives it a special kind of concentration of effect. One's attention is focused on a relatively small area of human experience and held there firmly until it has been completely explored. We may extend matters far beyond that area by implications, but there is no room for direct elaboration of the larger world. We stay with our restricted action, and every stroke must count. If the characters may not speak as much as they do in a novel, they must in one sense speak with greater compression. Part of the effect of drama resides in the care with which the dramatist restricts the dialogue to the specific issue with which the play is concerned. Much is eliminated which in a novel would be a legitimate part of a fuller presentation of the characters' lives. Now this compression, this treatment of a bare conflict divested of all attendant circumstances, is itself a source of tension—that effect of "tightening up" which in a work denotes crucial events and in ourselves a heightened attention and concern. And this increase in tension means that the language naturally develops toward that of poetry—toward a more perceptible rhythm and the use of figures that is characteristic of heightened emotion. It has been argued that great drama must take poetic form.* Very frequently it does just that. And now the student will observe that our very discussion of the limitations of drama has gradually led us into another subject—the breaking of those limitations. That is, if drama seems on the one hand to give up so many means of expression that it must become blunt and fumbling, it at the same time makes compensating adjustments. For it gains the precision and exactness essential in literature, first, by the very act of eliminating everything but a bare central theme and, second, by dealing with that theme in the most expressive but at the same time the most controlled kind of language. So, ironically, in considering the special symbols of drama we have inevitably come around to an earlier point, its sharing of the symbols of poetry. One cannot strictly compartmentalize drama, for at its height it combines two modes of concentration.

* A character in T. S. Eliot's "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" says, "The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse." Another character says, "All poetry tends toward drama, and all drama toward poetry."

3. *Special Problems of the Drama*

Just as the drama has certain characteristics in common with other literary forms, so the dramatist has certain problems in common with other writers: he must find concrete ways of saying what he has to say, he must find specific situations through which he can control the responses of the reader, he must exploit and develop these situations, he must find and develop characters who give a sense of reality. But because of the differences of drama from other forms, the dramatist must face certain problems. The problems arise out of the two main aspects of drama—the fact that it is limited in scope, and the fact that it works entirely through dialogue.

In theory, there is perhaps no reason why the drama should not be as long as a writer may choose to make it. In the twentieth century both Thomas Hardy and Eugene O'Neill have used the dramatic form in compositions which have far exceeded the traditional five, four, or three-act length. But the fact is that these are striking exceptions to a remarkably consistent practice. The length of drama has always been largely determined by the two or three hours conventionally allotted for public performance, and the influence of this form has been so strong that even writers of "closet" drama (plays not intended to be acted) have largely adhered to it. What we must now do is see what special characteristics the drama takes on because of this generally accepted limitation.*

1 PROBLEMS OF SCOPE

The Dramatic Situation. First of all, then, the dramatist must find a special kind of situation—one that is compact of its own nature or that can be made compact without vital loss. "Selection" is an important principle in the creative process of every artist, but the dramatist must utilize it most rigorously. He must get down to the bare center of a situation. *Hamlet* does not start with the original plot against Hamlet's father, nor *Lady Windermere's Fan* with the original difficulties of Lady Windermere's mother. In both works the experiences of the parents are quite important, and a novelist, for instance, might easily use them at length. But the plays must stick closely to the present and bring in the past only by suggestion.

* It is beyond the scope of this book to investigate whether the conventional length of drama has some justification more fundamental than theatrical practice. Such a conclusion is suggested by the general adherence of closet drama to this length. To have more than experimental evidence, a longer drama would have to prove itself a better medium of expression than (a) the three-to-five act drama and (b) the average length novel. This it has not yet done.

Drama works at the height of a situation; it must ignore earlier and later ramifications; if a situation does not have or cannot be made to have some high point, it is not a good one for drama. An obvious corollary is that the dramatist must work with relative rapidity; he must use fairly heavy emphasis in each step; he must cut out every possible suggestion of waste motion.

The student will recall, of course, that Shakespeare wrote a number of "chronicle plays" and that other dramatists have subsequently attempted to present rather complete dramatic records of men's lives. This kind of drama can, of course, be written. It is certain, however, that the problem is very difficult; that from such materials it is almost impossible to put together a "tight" and concentrated play; and that the few successes in the genre are triumphs of genius against all the probabilities. It would be impossible, for instance, to make a good dramatic version of Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*. It is worth noting, in this connection, that Shakespeare's chronicle plays are less distinguished than his tragedies, which deal with material much more limited in time. In the latter he follows the general dramatic practice of restricting himself to the heart of a situation, the exploding point of a conflict.

Number of Characters. Similarly the dramatist is much more limited than the novelist in the number of characters he can use. In much fiction, of course, as in drama, the conflict tends to shape up between two, or among several, main characters. But while the novelist is under no obligation to accept such a form, the dramatist must center his main action in a character or two. For this reason it is most important that he select the right kind of "lead," that he recognize clearly just what the issue is and whose actions are really significant (later we shall see in Ibsen some tendency to lose sight of the main center of action and thus to get our attention focused on the wrong character). Perhaps we may express it thus: each character bears a greater symbolic weight than in fiction. For there is nothing (except sheer inability to utilize them advantageously) to hinder the novelist from developing as fully as he pleases as many characters as he pleases. In Dickens we often find numerous "main" characters, and in our day there has been developed the "multiplicity" novel involving the use of multiple points of view (e. g., Huxley's *Point Counter Point*). This the dramatist cannot do. If, like Wilde in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, he wishes to present a group of people (Society) whom he sees as not homogeneous but diverse, he will need a number of different characters to indicate the diversity, and his problem becomes this: if he uses as many characters as he wishes, they may be blurred because of inadequate treatment; if he uses a small enough number to permit some fullness of presentation, he may not create the variety he desires. You will shortly observe how Wilde copes with the problem. At any rate, the more numerous the characters, the more subordinate will most of them become; you will notice that the idea of minor or "supporting" characters is one which we associate principally with drama, not with fiction. Such characters exist purely in relationship to someone else's situa-

might be an illuminating extension of the central action might in a play be only static. The dramatist is under pressure. But he cannot make his scene anticipatory in an artificial or strained way. In a melodrama we may accept a character's saying, "You will hear more of this later on," but in a play of serious intention that would be unbearably clumsy. Note how, in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, all of Act I points easily ahead toward Act II. For Act II presents a ball which various people are anticipating and to which they can therefore refer without giving the impression that the author is awkwardly pointing a finger ahead.

Exposition. The problem of dealing with the past, faced by all writers of narrative, becomes specialized when the sole medium is dialogue. This is the problem of "exposition," that is, of acquainting us with the background facts and the starting situation from which the main action moves forward. Fiction-writer and narrative-poet can begin with direct exposition or interpose it later, and fiction and cinema can both utilize different kinds of flashbacks. In drama the characters themselves must let us know what is what, and they must do it while they are talking about something else. They cannot inform us directly lest they speak for the author instead of themselves and thus get "out of character." What any person says must be consistent with his character generally, and with what he knows and what his auditor or auditors know. If characters are to be plausible, they cannot say things that to them would be stale or superfluous in order that the reader may secure certain information. The information must be implied in lines which are looking ahead rather than back; the dramatist must constantly keep two purposes in mind. He cannot make A. say to B.: "You remember, you came over to my house yesterday and gave me this subscription blank to sign and said that I should get it back to you by 2 o'clock this *afternoon*." This is easy exposition but entirely unnatural speech (unless we conceive of A. as making a statement of the facts for the sake of legal record). A. would probably say, "Well, here's your paper. I'm not giving you much, though." The reader must still find out the meaning of the paper, but the words "not giving you much" give him the clue from which he starts to make inferences.

The Use of Informative Devices. To a certain extent, presumably, the dramatist may attempt the use of devices which, as we have seen, work more easily in fiction—descriptions, comments, glances within, and other such clues. Older stage conventions (see the section on Conventions in the Glossary) gave him some help here; a good deal of "steering" could be done by the "aside" and by the solitary speaker's lines which were less a soliloquy than helpful hints to the audience. These are less reputable now. But even in their heyday they could not be used without limit; the dramatist had to depend on his standard dialogue to do double duty. As we have seen, description and comment are difficult, for, like everything else, they must not be obtrusive but must be consistent with character and situation. (Occasionally we find a character whose chief function is to interpret—like Enobarbus in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. But he is the exception

Naturalness: Poetic Drama. We have so far spoken of *naturalness* as if it were a conventional, objective, easily identifiable quality of spoken English. Obviously it is not that, for what is natural at one time is not natural at another; what is natural for one person is not natural for another; and what is natural for one person on one occasion is not natural for him on another. There are different levels of speech and different kinds of rhythm, and of these the dramatist must be especially aware precisely because his medium is dialogue. Too much speed, too much slang, too much formality, too much ordinariness can ruin a scene, which depends always upon suitableness to the person, to the occasion, and to the effect to be secured. The dramatist must take into account all these claims, and his own tact rather than hard-and-fast rules must guide him. If his tact is insufficient, the dialogue will not work.

Consider, as a special case, the writing of drama in poetic form, which was the standard in ancient and modern times until the eighteenth century and of which there have been revivals in our own day. How does this cohere with our expectation that dialogue be "natural"? Someone may say, "People don't talk poetry," and it is true that in ordinary relationships they do not. But the fact is that in extraordinary circumstances they do tend toward poetic language. And here we get into another complication: in drama, people are not, strictly speaking, "natural." Drama is brief, compressed, concerned with crucial events; people are disturbed, unusually tense; there is a great increase in emotional pressure. John Dryden even defended the use of heroic couplets in tragedy on the ground that only they could represent the characteristic heightening of effect; therefore, said he, they are "*natural.*" That is, people under pressure tend to speak in a more sharply accentuated rhythm and to use more figurative language ("It is a dream" *or* "You rat"—to use very commonplace examples—are metaphors which *represent* a heightened emotion in the speaker, who, whether he knows it or not, is speaking a simple form of poetry). So poetic language becomes natural in drama which achieves real intensity.

To put it in another way, we may say that poetic language is important among the symbols upon which drama relies. All discourse has to find effective symbols, and this symbol, since it springs from psychological necessity, is actually one of the least arbitrary. As a matter of fact, it should secure easier assent than some more familiar symbolic practices—such as saluting the flag. To say "People don't talk poetry" is like saying, "People don't venerate a piece of cloth that has a rather garish design in three colors."

It is clear that what has been said so far is particularly applicable to tragedy, where we especially find emotional pressure and intensity. In fact, it is even possible to argue that the shift from poetry to prose in the eighteenth century (Lillo's *London Merchant* unconsciously rebels against the change it inaugurates) marked the decline of the tragic sense. Shifting to another type, we find that comedy also has been written in verse. It is possible to secure in comedy a degree of tension comparable to that of

tragedy, though with differences due to the different methods of the two forms (see the Glossary for Tragedy and Comedy). On the other hand, far more good comedy than tragedy has been written in prose, a fact which suggests that, whatever degree of intensity it may achieve, comedy is fundamentally closer to everyday affairs than is tragedy. On the evidence of language alone, in comedy man is taken at the relatively commonplace level of manners and customs. The tensions that arise perhaps find their best symbolic expression in witty repartee—the mode of Congreve, Sheridan, and Wilde. It is notable that when Wilde deserts epigram for more commonplace means of emotional expression, he tends to fall very flat. It is notable, too, that a verse comedy like Jonson's *Volpone* introduces such a profound sense of evil that the tensions created resemble those of tragedy.

However, whether the dramatist uses poetry as a symbolic language of tragedy or epigram as a symbolic language of comedy, he is still not exempted from the other demands of "naturalness." Heightened language still draws on the vocabulary, idioms, and constructions available to certain types of people at certain times. A dramatist of our day might very well endeavor to use Shakespeare's poetic method; but if he endeavored to use the language—the vocabulary and constructions—of Shakespeare he would produce something completely improbable. He cannot use *thee, fardels, meseems, hath, doth*, etc. Here the danger is that of being archaic and exotic. A comparable danger is that of commonplaceness, of depending on clichés. "O save me from the fate that's worse than death" is technically blank verse, but the words are stale and therefore ineffective. In either case we feel that the speech is rhetorical or declamatory, getting away from naturalness in the best sense of that word but failing to convey a heightened sense of reality (i.e., to achieve poetry). In comedy, too, it is possible to [illegible] a [illegible] ness and unreality.

A literary form which depends wholly upon dialogue obviously faces complex difficulties. Speeches must not only be plausible as speeches and convey the heightened tension of drama, and be always appropriate to time, place, and character; but they must also present character and situation, bring the past pe[illegible]

Tempo. [illegible] moving for[illegible] be barely perceptible, or it may be fairly rapid, it seems clear that, depend[illegible] [illegible] *World*). We all have some idea of what tempo is and hence of what it should be; we often complain, for instance, that a movie is "slow." By that we

mean, really, that the producer has allotted too much time to events of secondary importance. Or in a play we may feel that the characters talk in such a way that the action is standing still or else moving forward very monotonously. So it is plain that a basic problem of the dramatist is giving to his dialogue that quality that will make it seem to move at a desirable speed and so allotting his limited space that we will not feel he has wasted any of it on less important materials.

For a fuller discussion of the ways in which the dramatist may accomplish these ends, the student may consult the Glossary.

4. *How the Problems Are Met*

DIFFERENT dramatists naturally find different answers to their common problems. We could not study all the answers even in an elaborate textbook, but we can understand certain representative ones. As a beginning, we shall make a rather careful study of a full-length comedy, Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892). Here we shall find various clues to the ways in which drama may work. These ways may not all be equally good ones, and our business will be to separate the more from the less successful devices.

If, as you read, you can succeed in finding for yourself answers to the question, "How would this be different if it were a short story or a novel?" you will be well on the way to grasping some fundamental truths about drama. Since certain aspects of dramatic structure appear in each act, each act will be followed by some preliminary discussion. The treatment of more extensive issues will be given at the end of the play.

1.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

By OSCAR WILDE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LORD WINDERMERE
LORD DARLINGTON
LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON
MR. DUMBY
MR. CECIL GRAHAM
MR. HOPPER
PARKER, Butler

LADY WINDERMERE
THE DUCHESS OF BERWICK
LADY AGATHA CARLISLE
LADY PLYMDALE
LADY STUTFIELD
LADY JEDBURGH
MRS. COWPER-COWPER
MRS. ERLYNNE
ROSALIE, Maid

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

Act I. Morning-room in Lord Windermere's House.
Act II. Drawing-room in Lord Windermere's House.
Act III. Lord Darlington's Rooms.
Act IV. Same as Act I.
Time: The Present.
Place: London.

[The action of the play takes place within twenty-four hours, beginning on a Tuesday afternoon at five o'clock, and ending the next day at 1:30 P.M.]

FIRST ACT

[SCENE. Morning-room of Lord Windermere's house in Carlton House Terrace. Doors C. and R. Bureau with books and papers R. Sofa with small tea-table L. Window opening on to terrace L. Table R.]

[*Lady Windermere is at table R., arranging roses in a blue bowl.*]

[*Enter Parker.*]

Parker. Is your ladyship at home this afternoon?

Lady Windermere. Yes—who has called?

Parker: Lord Darlington, my lady.

Lady Windermere. [*Hesitates for a moment.*] Show him up—and I'm at home to any one who calls.

P.: Yes, my lady. [*Exit C.*]

Lady W.: It's best for me to see him before to-night. I'm glad he's come.

[*Enter Parker C.*]

P.: Lord Darlington.

[*Enter Lord Darlington C. Exit P.*]

Lord Darlington. How do you do, Lady Windermere?

Lady W. How do you do, Lord Darlington? No, I can't shake hands with you. My hands are all wet with these roses. Aren't they lovely? They came up from Selby this morning.

Lord D. They are quite perfect. [*Sees a fan lying on the table.*] And what a wonderful fan! May I look at it?

Lady W. Do. Pretty, isn't it? It's got my name on it, and everything. I have only just seen it myself. It's my husband's birthday present to me. You know to-day is my birthday?

Lord D.: No? Is it really?

Lady W.: Yes, I'm of age to-day. Quite an important day in my life, isn't it? That is why I am giving this party to-night. Do sit down. [*Still arranging flowers.*]

Lord D. [*Sitting down.*] I wish I had known it was your birthday, Lady Windermere. I would have covered the whole street in front of your house with flowers for you to walk on. They are made for you. [*A short pause.*]

Lady W. Lord Darlington, you annoyed me last night at the Foreign Office. I am afraid you are going to annoy me again.

Lord D.: I, Lady Windermere? [*Enter Parker and Footman C., with tray and tea things.*]

Lady W. Put it there, Parker. That will do. [*Wipes her hands with her pocket-handkerchief, goes to tea-table L., and sits down.*] Won't you come over, Lord Darlington? [*Exit Parker C.*]

Lord D. [*Takes chair and goes across L.C.*] I am quite miserable, Lady Windermere. You must tell me what I did. [*Sits down at table L.*]

Lady W. Well, you kept paying me elaborate compliments the whole evening.

Lord D. [*Smiling.*] Ah, nowadays we are all of us so hard up, that the only pleasant things to pay *are* compliments. They're the only things we *can* pay.

Lady W.: [*Shaking her head.*] No. I am talking very seriously. You mustn't laugh, I am quite serious. I don't like compliments, and I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that he doesn't mean.

Lord D.: Ah, but I did mean them. [*Takes tea which she offers him.*]

Lady W.: [*Gravely.*] I hope not. I should be sorry to have to quarrel with you, Lord Darlington. I like you very much, you know that. But I shouldn't like you at all if I thought you were what most other men are. Believe me, you are better than most other men, and I sometimes think you pretend to be worse.

Lord D.: We all have our little vanities, Lady Windermere.

Lady W.: Why do you make that your special one? [*Still seated at table L.*]

Lord D.: [*Still seated L.C.*] Oh, nowadays so many conceited people go about Society pretending to be good, that I think it shows rather a sweet and modest disposition to pretend to be bad. Besides, there is this to be said. If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

Lady W.: Don't you *want* the world to take you seriously, then, Lord Darlington?

Lord D.: No, not the world. Who are the people the world takes seriously? All the dull people one can think of, from the bishops down to the bores. I should like you to take me very seriously, Lady Windermere, so more than anyone else in life.

Lady W.: Why—why me?

Lord D.: [*After a slight hesitation.*] Because I think we might be great friends. Let us be great friends. You may want a friend some day.

Lady W.: Why do you say that?

Lord D.: Oh!—we all want friends at times.

Lady W.: I think we're very good friends already. Lord Darlington. We can always remain so as long as you don't—

Lord D.: Don't what?

Lady W.: Don't spoil it by saying extravagant, silly things to me. You think I am a Puritan, I suppose? Well, I have something of the Puritan in me. I was brought up like that. I am glad of it. My mother died when I was a mere child. I lived always with Lady Julia, my father's elder sister, you know. She was stern to me, but she taught me what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong. *She* allowed of no compromise. *I* allow of none.

Lord D.: My dear Lady Windermere!

Lady W.: [*Leaning back on the sofa.*] You look on me as being behind the age.—Well, I am! I should be sorry to be on the same level as an age like this.

Lord D.: You think the age very bad?

Lady W.: Yes. Nowadays people seem to look on life as a speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. Its ideal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice.

Lord D.: [*Smiling.*] Oh, anything is better than being sacrificed!

Lady W.: [*Leaning forward.*] Don't say that.

Lord D.: I do say it. I feel it—I know it. [*Enter Parker C.*]

Parker: The men want to know if they are to put the carpets on the terrace for to-night, my lady?

Lady W.: You don't think it will rain, Lord Darlington, do you?

Lord D.: I won't hear of its raining on your birthday!

Lady W.: Tell them to do it at once, Parker. [*Exit Parker C.*]

Lord D.: [*Still seated.*] Do you think then—of course I am only putting an imaginary instance—do you think that in the case of a young married couple, say about two years married, if the husband suddenly becomes the intimate friend of a woman of—well, more than doubtful character—is always calling upon her, lunching with her, and prob-

ably paying her bills—do you think that the wife should not console herself?

Lady W.: [*Frowning.*] Console herself?

Lord D.: Yes, I think she should—I think she has the right.

Lady W.: Because the husband is vile—should the wife be vile also?

Lord D.: Vileness is a terrible word, Lady Windermere.

Lady W.: It is a terrible thing, Lord Darlington.

Lord D.: Do you know I am afraid that good people do a great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance. It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious. I take the side of the charming, and you, Lady Windermere, can't help belonging to them.

Lady W.: Now, Lord Darlington. [*Rising and crossing R., front of him.*] Don't stir, I am merely going to finish my flowers. [*Goes to table R.C.*]

Lord D.: [*Rising and moving chair.*] And I must say I think you are very hard on modern life, Lady Windermere. Of course there is much against it, I admit. Most women, for instance, nowadays, are rather mercenary.

Lady W.: Don't talk about such people.

Lord D.: Well then, setting aside mercenary people, who, of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have committed what the world calls a fault should never be forgiven?

Lady W.: [*Standing at table.*] I think they should never be forgiven.

Lord D.: And men? Do you think that there should be the same laws for men as there are for women?

Lady W.: Certainly!

Lord D.: I think life too complex a thing to be settled by these hard-and-fast rules.

Lady W.: If we had "these hard-and-fast rules," we should find life much more simple.

Lord D.: You allow of no exceptions?

Lady W.: None!

Lord D.: Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are, Lady Windermere!

Lady W.: The adjective was unnecessary, Lord Darlington.

Lord D.: I couldn't help it. I can resist everything except temptation.

Lady W.: You have the modern affectation of weakness.

Lord D.: [*Looking at her.*] It's only an affectation, Lady Windermere.

[*Enter Parker C.*]

Parker: The Duchess of Berwick and Lady Agatha Carlisle. [*Enter the Duchess of Berwick and Lady Agatha Carlisle C.*]

[*Exit Parker C.*]

Duchess of Berwick. [*Coming down C., and shaking hands.*] Dear Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember Agatha, don't you? [*Crossing L.C.*] How do you do, Lord Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you are far too wicked.

Lord D.: Don't say that, Duchess. As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there are lots of people who say I have never really done anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of course they only say it behind my back.

Duchess of B.: Isn't he dreadful? Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you don't believe a word he says. [*Lord Darlington crosses R.C.*] No, no tea, thank you, dear. [*Crosses and sits on sofa.*] We have just had tea at Lady Markby's. Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha is looking forward so much to your ball to-night, dear Margaret.

Lady W.: [*Seated L.C.*] Oh, you mustn't think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a dance in honour of my birthday. A small and early.

Lord D.: [*Standing L.C.*] Very small, very early, and very select, Duchess.

Duchess of B.: [*On sofa L.*] Of course it's going to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about *your* house. It is really one of the few houses in London

Duchess of B.: Will you go out on the terrace and look at the sunset?

Lady A.: Yes, mamma. [*Exit through window L.*]

Duchess of B.: Sweet girl! So devoted to sunsets! Shows such refinement of feeling, does it not? After all, there is nothing like Nature, is there?

Lady W.: But what is it, Duchess? Why do you talk to me about this person?

Duchess of B.: Don't you really [illegible] in such a way.

Lady W.: My husband—what has *he* to do with any woman of that kind?

Duchess of B.: Ah, what indeed, dear? That is the point. He goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a [illegible]

many disreputable men friends—my own brother particularly, as I told you—and that is what makes it so dreadful about Windermere. We looked upon *him* as being such a model husband, but I am afraid there is no doubt about it. My dear nieces—you know the Saville girls, don't you?—such nice domestic creatures—plain, dreadfully plain, but so good—well, they're always at the [illegible] istic days, and this terrible woman has taken a house in Curzon Street, right opposite them—such a respectable street, too. I don't know what we're coming to! And they tell me that Windermere goes there four and five times a week—they *see* him. They can't help it—and although they never talk scandal, they—well, of course—they remark on it to every one. And the worst of it all is that I have been told that this woman has got a great deal of money out of somebody, for it seems that she [illegible] drives her ponies in the Park every afternoon and all—well, all—since she has known poor dear Windermere.

Lady W.: Oh, I can't believe it!

Duchess of B.: But it's quite true, my dear. The whole of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk to you, and advise you to take [illegible] first married, I had to pretend to be very ill, and was obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters, merely to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave away any [illegible]

Duchess, it's impossible! [*Kissing and crossing stage to C.*] We are only married two years. Our child is but six months old. [*Sits in chair R. of L. table.*]

Duchess of B.: Ah, the dear pretty [illegible] are so wicked. My boy is excessively immoral. You wouldn't believe at what hours he comes home. And he's only left Oxford a few months—I really don't know what they teach them there.

Lady W.: Are *all* men bad?

Duchess of B.: Oh, all of them, my dear, all of them, without any exception. And they never grow any better. Men become old, but they never become good.

Lady W.: Windermere and I married for love.

Duchess of B.: Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick's brutal and incessant threats of suicide that made me accept him at all, and before the year

was out, he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every colour, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character.—No, I remember I passed her on to my sister; poor dear Sir George is so short-sighted, I thought it wouldn't matter. But it did, though—it was most unfortunate. [*Rises.*] And now, my dear child, I must go, as we are dining out. And mind you don't take this little aberration of Windermere's too much to heart. Just take him abroad and he'll come back to you all right.

Lady W.: Come back to me? [*C.*]

Duchess of B.: [*L.C.*] Yes, dear, these wicked women get our husbands away from us, but they always come back, slightly damaged, of course. And don't make scenes, men hate them!

Lady W.: It is very kind of you, Duchess, to come and tell me all this. But I can't believe that my husband is untrue to me.

Duchess of B.: Pretty child! I was like that once. Now I know that all men are monsters. [*Lady Windermere rings bell.*] The only thing to do is to feed the wretches well. A good cook does wonders, and that I know you have. My dear Margaret, you are not going to cry?

Lady W.: You needn't be afraid, Duchess, I never cry.

Duchess of B.: That's quite right, dear. Crying is the refuge of plain women but the ruin of pretty ones. Agatha, darling!

Lady A.: [*Entering L.*] Yes, mamma. [*Stands back of table L.C.*]

Duchess of B.: Come and bid good-bye to Lady Windermere, and thank her for your charming visit. [*Coming down again.*] And by the way, I must thank you for sending a card to Mr. Hopper—he's that rich young Australian people are taking such notice of just at present. His father made a great fortune by selling some kind of food in circular tins—most palatable, I believe—I fancy it is the thing the servants always refuse to eat. But the son is quite interesting. I think he's attracted by dear Agatha's clever talk. Of course, we should be very sorry to lose her, but I think that a mother who doesn't part with a daughter every season has no real affection. We're coming to-night, dear. [*Parker opens C. doors.*] And remember my advice, take the poor fellow out of town at once, it is the only thing to do. Good-bye, once more; come, Agatha. [*Exeunt Duchess and Lady Agatha C.*]

Lady W.: How horrible! I understand now what Lord Darlington meant by the imaginary instance of the couple not two years married. Oh! it can't be true—she spoke of enormous sums of money paid to this woman. I know where Arthur keeps his bank book—in one of the drawers of that desk. I might find out by that. I *will* find out. [*Opens drawer.*] No, it is some hideous mistake. [*Rises and goes C.*] Some silly scandal! He loves *me!* He loves *me!* But why should I not look? I am his wife, I have a right to look! [*Returns to bureau, takes out book and examines it page by page, smiles and gives a sigh of relief.*] I knew it! there is not a word of truth in this stupid story. [*Puts book back in drawer. As she does so, starts and takes out another book.*] A second book—private—locked! [*Tries to open it, but fails. Sees paper knife on bureau, and with it cuts cover from book. Begins to start at the first page.*] "Mrs. Erlynne—£600—Mrs. Erlynne—£700—Mrs. Erlynne—£400." Oh! it is true! it is true! How horrible! [*Throws book on floor.*] [*Enter Lord Windermere.*]

Lord W.: Well, dear, has the fan been sent home yet? [*Going R.C. Sees book.*] Margaret, you have cut open my bank book. You have no right to do such a thing!

Lady W.: You think it wrong that you are found out, don't you?

Lord W.: I think it wrong that a wife should spy on her husband.

content her. She wants you to receive her once.

Lady W.: As a triumph for her, I suppose?

Lord W.: No; but because she knows that you are a good woman—and that if she comes here once she will have a chance of a happier, a surer life than she has had. She will make no further effort to know you. Won't you help a woman who is trying to get back?

Lady W.: No! If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin.

Lord W.: I beg of you.

Lady W.: [*Crossing to door R.*] I am going to dress for dinner, and don't mention the subject again this evening. Arthur [*going to him C.*], you fancy because I have no father or mother that I am alone in the world, and that you can treat me as you choose. You are wrong, I have friends, many friends.

Lord W.: [*L.C.*] Margaret, you are talking foolishly, recklessly. I won't argue with you, but I insist upon your asking Mrs. Erlynne to-night.

Lady W.: [*R.C.*] I shall do nothing of the kind. [*Crossing L.C.*]

Lord W.: You refuse? [*C.*]

Lady W.: Absolutely!

Lord W.: Ah, Margaret, do this for my sake; it is her last chance.

Lady W.: What has that to do with me?

Lord W.: How hard good women are!

Lady W.: How weak bad men are!

Lord W.: Margaret, none of us men may be good enough for the women we marry—that is quite true—but you don't imagine I would ever—oh, the suggestion is monstrous!

Lady W.: Why should *you* be different from other men? I am told that there is hardly a husband in London who does not waste his life over *some* shameful passion.

Lord W.: I am not one of them.

Lady W.: I am not sure of that!

Lord W.: You are sure in your heart. But don't make chasm after chasm between us. God knows the last few minutes have thrust us wide enough apart. Sit down and write the card.

Lady W.: Nothing in the whole world would induce me.

Lord W.: [*Crossing to bureau.*] Then I will! [*Rings electric bell, sits and writes card.*]

Lady W.: You are going to invite this woman? [*Crossing to him.*]

Lord W.: Yes. [*Pause. Enter Parker.*] Parker!

Parker.: Yes, my lord. [*Comes down L.C.*]

Lord W.: Have this note sent to Mrs. Erlynne at No.. 84A Curzon Street. [*Crossing to L.C. and giving note to Parker.*] There is no answer! [*Exit Parker C.*]

Lady W.: Arthur, if that woman comes here, I shall insult her.

Lord W.: Margaret, don't say that.

Lady W.: I mean it.

Lord W.: Child, if you did such a thing, there's not a woman in London who wouldn't pity you.

Lady W.: There is not a *good* woman in London who would not applaud me. We have been too lax. We must make an example. I propose to begin to-night. [*Picking up fan.*] Yes, you gave me this fan to-day; it was your birthday present. If that woman crosses my threshold, I shall strike her across the face with it.

Lord W.: Margaret, you couldn't do such a thing.

Lady W.: You don't know me! [*Moves R.*] [*Enter Parker.*] Parker!

Parker: Yes, my lady.

Lady W.: I shall dine in my own room. I don't want dinner, in fact. See that everything is ready by half-past ten. And, Parker, be sure you pronounce the names of the guests very distinctly tonight. Sometimes you speak so fast that I miss them. I am particularly anxious to hear the names quite clearly, so as to make no mistake. You understand, Parker?

P.: Yes, my lady.

Lady W.: That will do! [*Exit Parker C.*] [*Speaking to Lord Windermere.*] Arthur, if that woman comes here—I warn you—

Lord W.: Margaret, you'll ruin us!

Lady W.: Us! From this moment my life is separate from yours. But if you wish to avoid a public scandal, write at once to this woman, and tell her that I forbid her to come here!

Lord W.: I will not—I cannot—she must come!

Lady W.: Then I shall do exactly as I have said. [*Goes R.*] You leave me no choice. [*Exit R.*]

Lord W.: [*Calling after her.*] Margaret! Margaret! [*A pause.*] My God! What shall I do? I dare not tell her who this woman really is. The shame would kill her. [*Sinks down into a chair and buries his face in his hands.*]

NOTES ON ACT I

Characterization. Act I introduces six characters. Since Wilde cannot describe them as he might in a novel or analyze their personalities for us, he depends upon arrangement to aid us in establishing their identity. By introducing them in terms of sharp contrast he distinguishes them superficially until we are better acquainted with them and can make more fundamental distinctions. For instance, we first meet a man and a woman, Lord Darlington and Lady Windermere, who have sharply divergent views of life. Using this one case as an example, the student should ask himself: What other use of sharp contrasts in Act I contributes to a quick preliminary identification of characters?

In place of the novelist's analysis, the dramatist can use self-analysis by a character; but then, of course, his problem is to justify the self-analysis. Note Lady W.'s speech beginning "Don't spoil it by saying, etc." (p. 36b, 5), a speech which is very useful in characterizing Lady W., but which does not seem forced. Why does it not seem forced and unnatural? Because it is a logical part of, and an explanation of, her protest to Lord D. Again, the Duchess of B. makes long speeches, in which, though she does not analyze herself, she gives herself away completely. With her, Wilde's problem is easier: a loquacious, insensitive person is very likely to speak freely about herself. Can you find other instances of characters' making revealing speeches about themselves without our feeling that the speeches are forced?

Exposition. Act I also carries a very heavy weight of exposition: we learn about the birthday, the fan, the coming party, Lord D.'s unsuccessful attentions to Lady W.; her position in society, the Duchess of B.'s ideas and her plans for her daughter, Lord W.'s mysterious interest in a mysterious Mrs. Erlynne whom Lady W. must entertain but whom she is not to identify. Wilde manages exposition so skillfully that we learn essential matters almost without knowing that we are learning them. For example, Lord D.'s comment on the fan is natural; hence we learn about the birthday; this fact, in turn, gives Lord D. an opening for making love—an excellent situation for characterizing the participants. Wilde has the Duchess of B. talk informatively, but he tries to keep her lines from seeming

SECOND ACT

[*Scene.* Drawing-room in Lord Windermere's house. Door R.U. opening into ball-room, where band is playing. Door L. through which guests are entering. Door L.U. opens on to illuminated terrace. Palms, flowers, and brilliant lights. Room crowded with guests. Lady Windermere is receiving them.]

Duchess of B.: [*Up C.*] So strange Lord Windermere isn't here. Mr. Hopper is very late, too. You have kept those five dances for him, Agatha? [*Comes down.*]

Lady A.: Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B.: [*Sitting on sofa.*] Just let me see your card. I'm so glad Lady Windermere has revived cards.—They're a mother's only safeguard. You dear simple little thing! [*Scratches out two names.*] No nice girl should ever waltz with such particularly younger sons! It looks so fast! The last two dances you might pass on the terrace with Mr. Hopper. [*Enter Mr. Dumby and Lady Plymdale from the ball-room.*]

Lady A.: Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B.: [*Fanning herself.*] The air is so pleasant there.

Parker. Mrs. Cowper-Cowper. Lady Stutfield. Sir James Royston. Mr. Guy Berkeley. [*These people enter as announced.*]

Dumby: Good evening, Lady Stutfield. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

Lady Stutfield: I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It's been a delightful season, hasn't it?

Dumby: Quite delightful! Good evening, Duchess. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

Duchess of B.: I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It has been a very dull season, hasn't it?

D.: Dreadfully dull! Dreadfully dull!

Mrs. Cowper-Cowper: Good evening, Mr. Dumby. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

D.: Oh, I think not. There'll probably be two more. [*Wanders back to Lady Plymdale.*]

Parker: Mr. Rufford. Lady Jedburgh and Miss Graham. Mr. Hopper. [*These people enter as announced.*]

Hopper: How do you do, Lady Windermere? How do you do, Duchess? [*Bows to Lady Agatha.*]

Duchess of B.: Dear Mr. Hopper, how nice of you to come so early. We all know how you are run after in London.

Hopper: Capital place, London! They are not nearly so exclusive in London as they are in Sydney.

Duchess of B.: Ah! we know your value, Mr. Hopper. We wish there were more like you. It would make life so much easier. Do you know, Mr. Hopper, dear Agatha and I are so much interested in Australia. It must be so pretty with all the dear little kangaroos flying about. Agatha has found it on the map. What a curious shape it is! Just like a large packing case. However, it is a very young country, isn't it?

H.: Wasn't it made at the same time as the others, Duchess?

Duchess of B.: How clever you are, Mr. Hopper. You have a cleverness quite of your own. Now I mustn't keep you.

H.: But I should like to dance with Lady Agatha, Duchess.

Duchess of B.: Well, I *hope* she has a dance left. Have you a dance left, Agatha?

Lady A.: Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B.: The next one?

Lady A.: Yes, mamma.

H.: May I have the pleasure? [*Lady Agatha bows.*]

Duchess of B.: Mind you take great care of my little chatterbox, Mr. Hopper. [*Lady Agatha and Mr. Hopper pass into ball-room.*] [*Enter Lord Windermere L.*]

Lord W.: Margaret, I want to speak to you.

Lady W.: In a moment. [*The music stops.*]

P.: Lord Augustus Lorton. [*Enter Lord Augustus.*]

Lord Augustus: Good evening, Lady Windermere

Duchess of B.: Sir James, will you take me into the ball-room? Augustus has been dining with us to-night. I really have had quite enough of dear Augustus for the moment. [*Sir James Royston gives the Duchess his arm and escorts her into the ball-room.*]

P.: Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bowden. Lord and Lady Paisley. Lord Darlington. [*These people enter as announced.*]

Lord A.: [*Coming up to Lord Windermere.*] Want to speak to you particularly, dear boy. I'm worn to a shadow. Know I don't look it None of us men do look what we really are. Demmed good thing, too. What I want to know is this. Who is she? Where does she come from? Why hasn't she got any demmed relations? Demmed nuisance, relations! But they make one so demmed respectable.

Lord W.. You are talking of Mrs. Erlynne, I suppose? I only met her six months ago. Till then, I never knew of her existence.

Lord A.: You have seen a good deal of her since then

Lord W.: [*Coldly.*] Yes, I have seen a good deal of her since then I have just seen her.

Lord A.: Egad! the women are very down on her. I have been dining with Arabella this evening! By Jove! you should have heard what she said about Mrs Erlynne. She didn't leave a rag on her. . . . [*Aside*] Berwick and I told her that didn't matter much as the lady in question must have an extremely fine figure You should have seen Arabella's expression! But, look here, dear boy I don't know what to do about Mrs Erlynne Egad! I might be married to her, she treats me with such demmed indifference She's deuced clever, too! She explains everything Egad! she explains you She has got any amount of explanations for you—and all of them different

Lord W. No explanations are necessary about my friendship with Mrs. Erlynne.

Lord A.: Hem! Well, look here, dear old fellow. Do you think she will ever get into this demmed thing called Society? Would you introduce her to your wife? No use beating about the confounded bush. Would you do that?

Lord W.: Mrs. Erlynne is coming here to-night.

Lord A.: Your wife has sent her a card?

Lord W.: Mrs Erlynne has received a card.

Lord A.: Then she's all right, dear boy. But why didn't you tell me that before? It would have saved me a heap of worry and demmed misunderstandings! [*Lady Agatha and Mr. Hopper cross and exeunt on terrace L.U.E.*]

P.: Mr. Cecil Graham! [*Enter Mr. Cecil Graham.*]

Cecil Graham: [*Bows to Lady Windermere, passes over and shakes hands with Lord Windermere*] Good evening, Arthur. Why don't you ask me how I am? I like people to ask me how I am. It shows a widespread interest in my health Now, to-night I am not at all well. Been dining with my people. Wonder why it is one's people are always so tedious? My father would talk morality after dinner. I told him he was old enough to know better. But my experience is that as soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all. Hallo, Tuppy! Hear you're going to be married again; thought you were tired of that game.

Lord A You're excessively trivial, my dear boy, excessively trivial!

Cecil G. By the way, Tuppy, which is it? Have you been twice married and once divorced, or twice divorced and once married? I say you've been twice divorced and once married It seems so much more probable.

Lord A. I have a very bad memory. I really don't remember which [*Moves away R.*]

Lady Plymdale Lord Windermere,

I've something most particular to ask you.

Lord W.: I am afraid—if you will excuse me—I must join my wife.

Lady P.: Oh, you mustn't dream of such a thing. It's most dangerous nowadays for a husband to pay any attention to his wife in public. It always makes people think that he beats her when they're alone. The world has grown so suspicious of anything that looks like a happy married life. But I'll tell you what it is at supper. [*Moves towards door of ball-room.*]

Lord W.: [*C.*] Margaret! I *must* speak to you.

Lady W.: Will you hold my fan for me, Lord Darlington? Thanks. [*Comes down to him.*]

Lord W.: [*Crossing to her.*] Margaret, what you said before dinner was, of course, impossible?

Lady W.: That woman is not coming here to-night!

Lord W.: [*R.C.*] Mrs. Erlynne is coming here, and if you in any way annoy or wound her, you will bring shame and sorrow on us both. Remember that! Ah, Margaret! only trust me! A wife should trust her husband!

Lady W.: [*C.*] London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognise them. They look so thoroughly unhappy. I am not going to be one of them. [*Moves up.*] Lord Darlington, will you give me back my fan, please? Thanks. . . . A useful thing a fan, isn't it? . . . I want a friend to-night, Lord Darlington: I didn't know I would want one so soon.

Lord D.: Lady Windermere! I knew the time would come some day; but why to-night?

Lord W.: I *will* tell her. I must. It would be terrible if there were any scene. Margaret . . .

P.: Mrs. Erlynne! [*Lord Windermere starts. Mrs. Erlynne enters, very beautifully dressed and very dignified. Lady Windermere clutches at her fan, then lets it drop on the floor. She bows coldly to Mrs. Erlynne, who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room.*]

Lord D.: You have dropped your fan, Lady Windermere. [*Picks it up and hands it to her.*]

Mrs. Erlynne: [*C.*] How do you do, again, Lord Windermere? How charming your sweet wife looks! Quite a picture!

Lord W.: [*In a low voice.*] It was terribly rash of you to come!

Mrs. E.: [*Smiling.*] The wisest thing I ever did in my life. And, by the way, you must pay me a good deal of attention this evening. I am afraid of the women. You must introduce me to some of them. The men I can always manage. How do you do, Lord Augustus? You have quite neglected me lately. I have not seen you since yesterday. I am afraid you're faithless. Every one told me so.

Lord A.: [*R.*] Now really, Mrs. Erlynne, allow me to explain.

Mrs. E.: [*R.C.*] No, dear Lord Augustus, you can't explain anything. It is your chief charm.

Lord A.: Ah! if you find charms in me, Mrs. Erlynne—[*They converse together. Lord Windermere moves uneasily about the room watching Mrs. Erlynne.*]

Lord D.: [*To Lady Windermere.*] How pale you are!

Lady W.: Cowards are always pale!

Lord D.: You look faint. Come out on the terrace.

Lady W.: Yes. [*To Parker.*] Parker, send my cloak out.

Mrs. E.: [*Crossing to her.*] Lady Windermere, how beautifully your terrace is illuminated. Reminds me of Prince Doria's at Rome. [*Lady Windermere bows coldly, and goes off with Lord Darlington.*] Oh, how do you do, Mr. Graham? Isn't that your aunt, Lady Jedburgh? I should so much like to know her.

Cecil G.: [*After a moment's hesitation and embarrassment.*] Oh, certainly, if you wish it. Aunt Caroline, allow me to introduce Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E.: So pleased to meet you, Lady Jedburgh. [*Sits beside her on the sofa.*] Your nephew and I are great friends. I am so much interested in his political career. I think he's sure to be a wonderful success. He thinks like a Tory, and talks like a Radical, and that's so important nowadays. He's such a brilliant talker, too. But we all know from whom he inherits that. Lord Allandale was saying to me only yesterday, in the Park, that Mr. Graham talks almost as well as his aunt.

Lady Jedburgh: [*R.*] Most kind of you to say these charming things to me! [*Mrs. Erlynne smiles, and continues conversation.*]

Dumby: [*To Cecil Graham.*] Did you introduce Mrs. Erlynne to Lady Jedburgh?

Cecil G.: Had to, my dear fellow. Couldn't help it! That woman can make [illegible]

[illegible]

to me! [*Saunters towards Lady Plymdale.*]

Mrs. Erlynne: [*C. To Lady Jedburgh.*] On Thursday? With great pleasure. [*Rises, and speaks to Lord Windermere, laughing.*] What a bore it is to have to be civil to these old dowagers! But they always insist on it!

Lady P.: [*To Mr. Dumby.*] Who is that well-dressed woman talking to Windermere?

D.: Haven't got the slightest idea! Looks like an *édition de luxe* of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market.

Mrs. E.: So that is poor Dumby with Lady Plymdale? I hear she is frightfully jealous of him. He doesn't seem anxious to speak to me to-night. I suppose he is afraid of her. Those straw-coloured women have dreadful tempers. Do you know, I think I'll dance with you first, Windermere. [*Lord Windermere bites his lip and frowns.*] It will make Lord Augustus so jealous! Lord Augustus! [*Lord Augustus comes down.*] Lord Windermere insists on my dancing with him first, and, as it's his own house, I can't well refuse. You know I would much sooner dance with you.

Lord A.: [*With a low bow.*] I wish I could think so, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E.: You know it far too well. I can fancy a person dancing through life with you and finding it charming.

Lord A.: [*Placing his hand on his white waistcoat.*] Oh, thank you, thank you. You are the most adorable of all ladies!

Mrs. Erlynne: What a nice speech! So simple and so sincere! Just the sort of speech I like. Well, you shall hold my bouquet. [*Goes towards ball-room on Lord Windermere's arm.*] Ah, Mr. Dumby, how are you? I am so sorry I have been out the last three times you have called. Come and lunch on Friday.

D.: [*With perfect nonchalance.*] De- [illegible]

[illegible] *mere into the ball-room holding bouquet.*]

Lady P.: [*To Mr. Dumby.*] What an absolute brute you are! I never can believe a word you say! Why did you tell me you didn't know her? What do you mean by calling on her three times running? You are not to go to lunch there; of course you understand that?

D.: My dear Laura, I wouldn't dream of going!

Lady P.: You haven't told me her name yet! Who is she?

D.: [*Coughs slightly and smooths his hair.*] She's a Mrs. Erlynne.

Lady P.: That woman!

D.: Yes; that is what every one calls her.

Lady P.: How very interesting! How intensely interesting! I really must have a good stare at her. [*Goes to door of ball-room and looks in.*] I have heard the most shocking things about her. They say she is ruining poor Windermere. And Lady Windermere, who goes in for being so proper, invites her! How extremely amusing! It takes a thoroughly

Mrs. E.: Oh, no! I do the encouraging. But you will make me a handsome settlement, Windermere, won't you?

Lord W.: [*Frowning.*] Is that what you want to talk to me about to-night?

Mrs. E.: Yes.

Lord W.: [*With a gesture of impatience.*] I will not talk of it here.

Mrs. E.: [*Laughing.*] Then we will talk of it on the terrace. Even business should have a picturesque background. Should it not, Windermere? With a proper background women can do anything.

Lord W.: Won't to-morrow do as well?

Mrs. E.: No; you see, to-morrow I am going to accept him. And I think it would be a good thing if I was able to tell him that I had—well, what shall I say?—£2000 a year left to me by a third cousin—or a second husband—or some distant relative of that kind. It would be an additional attraction, wouldn't it? You have a delightful opportunity now of paying me a compliment, Windermere. But you are not very clever at paying compliments I am afraid Margaret doesn't encourage you in that excellent habit. It's a great mistake on her part. When men give up saying what is charming, they give up thinking what is charming. But seriously, what do you say to £2000? £2500, I think. In modern life margin is everything. Windermere, don't you think the world an intensely amusing place? I do! [*Exit on terrace with Lord Windermere. Music strikes up in ball-room.*]

Lady W.: To stay in this house any longer is impossible. To-night a man who loves me offered me his whole life. I refused it It was foolish of me. I will offer him mine now. I will give him mine. I will go to him! [*Puts on cloak and goes to the door, then turns back. Sits down at table and writes a letter, puts it into an envelope, and leaves it on table.*] Arthur has never understood me. When he reads this, he will. He may do as he chooses now with his life. I have done with mine as I think best, as I think right. It is he who has broken the bond of marriage—not I. I only break its bondage. [*Exit.*] [*Parker enters L. and crosses towards the ball-room R. Enter Mrs. Erlynne.*]

Mrs. E.: Is Lady Windermere in the ball-room?

P.: Her ladyship has just gone out.

Mrs. E.: Gone out? She's not on the terrace?

P.: No, madam. Her ladyship has just gone out of the house.

Mrs. E.: [*Starts, and looks at the servant with a puzzled expression in her face.*] Out of the house?

P.: Yes, madam—her ladyship told me she had left a letter for his lordship on the table.

Mrs. E.: A letter for Lord Windermere?

P.: Yes, madam.

Mrs E.: Thank you. [*Exit Parker. The music in the ball-room stops.*] Gone out of her house! A letter addressed to her husband! [*Goes over to bureau and looks at letter. Takes it up and lays it down again with a shudder of fear.*] No, no! It would be impossible! Life doesn't repeat its tragedies like that! Oh, why does this horrible fancy come across me? Why do I remember now the one moment of my life I most wish to forget? Does life repeat its tragedies? [*Tears letter open and reads it, then sinks down into a chair with a gesture of anguish.*] Oh, how terrible! The same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father! and how bitterly I have been punished for it! No; my punishment, my real punishment is to-night, is now! [*Still seated R.*] [*Enter Lord Windermere L.U.E.*]

Lord W.: Have you said good-night to my wife? [*Comes C.*]

Mrs E.: [*Crushing letter in her hand.*] Yes

Lord W.: Where is she?

Mrs. E.: She is very tired. She has gone to bed She said she had a headache.

Lord W.: I must go to her. You'll excuse me?

Mrs. E.: [*Rising hurriedly.*] Oh, no! It's nothing serious. She's only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn't wish to be disturbed. [*Drops letter.*] She asked me to tell you!

Lord W.: [*Picks up letter.*] You have dropped something.

Mrs. E.: Oh yes, thank you, that is mine. [*Puts out her hand to take it.*]

Lord W.: [*Still looking at letter.*] But it's my wife's handwriting, isn't it?

Mrs. E.: [*Takes the letter quickly.*] Yes, it's—an address. Will you ask them to call my carriage, please?

Lord W.: Certainly. [*Goes L. and Exit.*]

Mrs. E.: Thanks! What can I do? What can I do? I feel a passion awakening within me that I never felt before. What can it mean? The daughter must not be like the mother—that would be terrible. How can I save her? How can I save my child? A moment may ruin a life. Who knows that better than I? Windermere must be got out of the house; that is absolutely necessary. [*Goes L.*] But how shall I do it? It must be done somehow. Ah! [*Enter Lord Augustus R.U.E. carrying bouquet.*]

Lord. A.: Dear lady, I am in such suspense! May I not have an answer to my request?

Mrs. E.: Lord Augustus, listen to me. You are to take Lord Windermere down to your club at once, and keep him there as long as possible. You understand?

Lord A.: But you said you wished me to keep early hours!

Mrs. E.: [*Nervously.*] Do what I tell you. Do what I tell you.

Lord A.: And my reward?

Mrs. E.: Your reward? Your reward? Oh! ask me that to-morrow. But don't let Windermere out of your sight to-night. If you do I will never forgive you. I will never speak to you again. I'll have nothing to do with you. Remember you are to keep Windermere at your club, and don't let him come back to-night. [*Exit L.*]

Lord A.: Well, really, I might be her husband already. Positively I might. [*Follows her in a bewildered manner.*]

NOTES ON ACT II

Act II is the product of all the skillful preparations made in Act I. Note how all the lines of action established in Act I—those in which the Duchess, Lady W., and Mrs. Erlynne are the principals—have been followed up. Because of the carefulness and completeness of the prearrangements, everything appears to move ahead very smoothly.

But in writing Act II Wilde has more of a task than that of presenting the inevitable outcome of what was started in Act I. He has to arrange a complex set of materials in such a way that interest will be continuous, action progressive, and the effect climactic. Note his great initial advantage in having all the action take place at a ball: because of this fact the whole problem of exits and entrances becomes an easy one, and the author gains an unusual freedom in moving his characters about—in and out of the scene. He can devote all his energies to the effects he wishes to secure.

The Structure of Act II. The main structure of Act II is clear: Wilde arranges all the action around *three major points* of interest. So the whole Act moves in a recognizable *rhythm* of heightening and decreasing tension, reaching three climactic points, the third being the most sustained. This

pattern is amplified further by Wilde's use of two moods, one quite serious, the other rather gay and witty. He alternates these not only for variety but also to support the basic pattern: the relaxation after a tense point usually takes the form of a lighter and gayer passage. The Act is written, as it were, in contrasting panels.

It is also written so as to present a logical progression from one high point to another: Lady W. has to be influenced by Mrs. Erlynne before she can listen to further proposals by Darlington, and she needs further persuasion by Darlington before she can decide to leave with him. Hence the Act seems tight and orderly in its construction.

The first high point is the arrival of Mrs. Erlynne, an incident toward which the latter part of Act I has been pointed. Notice how carefully Wilde sets the stage for Mrs. E.'s entry, toward which the first part of Act II moves in a crescendo. First, we have a general view of society. But in order to keep this from being detached and undramatic, Wilde uses, as a center for it, the already familiar Berwick-Agatha-Hopper action, which is developed a step further. Second, we have the dialogue between Lord Augustus and Lord Windermere, which not only focuses our attention on the coming arrival of Mrs. E., but also indicates Lord Augustus's interest in her and thus looks ahead toward other possibilities. Further, since Lord Augustus is the brother of the Duchess of Berwick, we find signs of a division in Society's attitude toward Mrs. Erlynne. Then, just before Mrs. E.'s arrival, Wilde skillfully focuses our attention by means of the fan. Why does he wish to make us very conscious of the fan? How does he set about doing it? What is the significance of Lady Windermere's dropping her fan at the climactic moment?

When Lady Windermere does not strike or assault Mrs. Erlynne, the issue is of course settled for the moment, tension relaxes, and Wilde introduces a panel of action in the lighter mood. But the contrast in tone does not obscure a real continuity: first Mrs. Erlynne faces her chief enemy, Lady Windermere, and then goes on to face the others Matters become slightly more serious in the dialogue between Dumby and Lady Plymdale, which is brief but significant. What is Wilde getting at by indicating quite clearly the relationship between the two? The tone again becomes completely serious in the Darlington-Lady W. dialogue, which contains the second climactic moment of the Act—Lady W.'s refusal of Darlington.

Again we find a reduction of tension and a humorous panel—the completion of the Agatha-Hopper affair. Can you see by now how this secondary strand of action is woven into the theme? What, for instance, is the relation of this "love" affair to the love of Darlington for Lady W.? To Lady Berwick's suspicion of Mrs. Erlynne and of husbands in general? How does the Duchess contrast with Lady W.?

The third period of high tension is the most sustained, lasting from Lady W.'s decision to the end of the Act. Note how the three climaxes are related: since the second is more sustained than the first, and the third more than the second, we have an over-all rising movement, and further, at each

climax. Lady W. is *making a decision*. In other words, the act is essentially hers, dramatizing her psychological development.

Evidences of Melodrama. After Lady W. leaves, however, and Mrs. Erlynne takes over the stage, we have a *shift in point of view*. That is, Wilde is not merely examining Lady W.'s internal conflict; rather he is interested in making a comparison. Hence we must learn about the comparable case. Since he wished to do it in this way, Wilde was doubtless willing to take the risk of the loss of continuity entailed in the shift of point of view.

Here is a good opportunity to note a difference between drama and other forms. Either a movie or a novel, for instance, could have kept both Lady W. and Mrs. Erlynne in view simultaneously and thus achieved some excellent effects. Drama cannot, so to speak, see things *simultaneously* but must present them *consecutively*. What it so loses is clear; but can you also see what it may gain? Further, how might the party of Act II have been handled differently by fiction or movie? What other events might have been presented directly? What might a movie have tended to overemphasize?

Note certain other problems at this point: (1) Lest Mrs. Erlynne's concern over Lady W. seem unmotivated, Wilde must make explanations. Why must Wilde use a soliloquy here? Now, we can accept the soliloquy as a *convention* (see Glossary), but beyond that we also can ask that it *work*. The question is not so much, Is it true to life?, as, Does it do what it is supposed to do? In this case, does Mrs. Erlynne's revelation seem easily and logically made, and does her emotion seem plausible? Or is it awkward and unconvincing, and even rather melodramatic? Does the management of this part of the act seem to indicate hasty or careless work on the part of Wilde? (2) Since Lord Augustus is Mrs. Erlynne's only available helper, it is he who must get Lord W. out of the house. But from what we have seen of Lord A. it is difficult to believe that he could get anybody to go anywhere (note, incidentally, that this little episode increases our knowledge of the relationship between Mrs. E. and Lord A.). (3) Mrs. Erlynne can discover and take part in what is going on only by finding and reading a letter addressed to someone else. Is not this the sort of device used in adventure and mystery stories, that is, in *melodrama*? (For a further discussion of this term, see the Glossary.)

In fact, do not all the difficulties here derive from the fact that Wilde is giving the play a melodramatic turn? He appears to lose interest in presenting the development of Lady W.'s character and to prefer, instead, to save her from the consequences of her mistake. That is, by turning from Lady W., he shows that he actually stops studying her beliefs and impulses; he turns from *analyzing* her to *rescuing* her. As Mrs. Erlynne takes charge of the situation, what we see coming up is precisely the last-minute rescue. Wilde gives up the problem of character and limits himself to purely external, mechanical matters. This is one of the ways of melodrama.

THIRD ACT

[Scene. Lord Darlington's Rooms. A large sofa is in front of fireplace R. At the back of the stage a curtain is drawn across the window. Doors L. and R. Tal[illegible] C. [illegible] fra[illegible] arette box. Lamps lit.]

Lady W.: [*Standing by the fireplace.*] Why doesn't he come? This waiting is horrible. He should be here. Why is he not here, to wake by passionate words some fire within me? I am cold—cold as a loveless thing. Arthur must have read my letter by this time. If he cared for me, he would have come after me, would have taken me back by force. But he doesn't care. He's entrammelled by this woman—fascinated by her—dominated by her. If a woman wants to hold a man, she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him. We make gods of men and they leave us. Others makes brutes of them and they fawn and are faithful. How hideous life is! . . . Oh! it was mad of me to come here, horribly mad. And yet, which is the worst, I wonder, to be at the mercy of a man who loves one, or the wife of a man who in one's own house dishonours one? What woman knows? What woman in the whole world? But will he love me always, this man to whom I am giving my life? What do I bring him? Lips that have lost the note of joy, eyes that are blinded by tears, chill hands and icy heart. I bring him nothing. I must go back—no; I can't go back, my letter has put me in their [illegible] *for a few moments. Then starts up and puts on her cloak.*] No, no! I will go back, let Arthur do with me what he pleases. I can't wait here. It has been madness my coming. I must go at once. As for Lord Darlington—Oh! here he is! What shall I do? What can I say to him? Will he let me go away at all? I have heard that men are brutal, horrible . . . Oh! [*Hides her face in her hands.*] [*Enter Mrs. Erlynne L.*]

Mrs. E.: Lady Windermere! [*Lady Windermere starts and looks up. Then recoils in contempt.*] Thank Heaven I am in time. You must go back to your husband's house immediately.

Lady W.: Must?

Mrs. E.: [*Authoritatively.*] Yes, you must! There is not a second to be lost. Lord Darlington may return at any moment.

Lady W.: Don't come near me!

Mrs. E. Oh! You are on the brink of ruin, you are on the brink of a hideous precipice. You must leave this place at once, my carriage is waiting at the corner of the street. You must come with me and drive straight home. [*Lady Windermere throws off her cloak and flings it on the sofa.*] What are you doing?

Lady W. Mrs Erlynne—if you had not come here, I would have gone back. But now that I see you, I feel that nothing in the whole world would induce me to live under the same roof as Lord Windermere. You fill me with horror. There is something about you that stirs the wildest—rage within me. And I know why you are here. My husband sent you to lure me back that I might serve as a blind to whatever relations exist between you and him.

Mrs. E.: Oh! You don't think that—you can't.

Lady W.. Go back to my husband, Mrs. Erlynne. He belongs to you and not to me. I suppose he is afraid of a scandal. Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue. But he had better prepare himself. He shall have a scandal. He shall have the worst scandal there has been in London for years. He shall see his name in every vile paper, mine on every hideous placard.

Mrs. Erlynne: No—no—

Lady W.: Yes! he shall. Had he come

himself. I admit I would have gone back to the life of degradation you and he had prepared for me—I was going back—but to stay himself at home, and to send you as his messenger—oh! it was infamous—infamous.

Mrs. E.: [*C.*] Lady Windermere, you wrong me horribly—you wrong your husband horribly. He doesn't know you are here—he thinks you are safe in your own house. He thinks you are asleep in your own room. He never read the mad letter you wrote to him!

Lady W.: [*R.*] Never read it!

Mrs. E.: No—he knows nothing about it.

Lady W.: How simple you think me! [*Going to her.*] You are lying to me!

Mrs. E.: [*Restraining herself.*] I am not. I am telling you the truth.

Lady W.: If my husband didn't read my letter, how is it that you are here? Who told you I had left the house you were shameless enough to enter? Who told you where I had gone to? My husband told you, and sent you to decoy me back. [*Crosses L.*]

Mrs. E.: [*R.C.*] Your husband has never seen the letter. I—saw it, I opened it. I—read it.

Lady W.: [*Turning to her.*] You opened a letter of mine to my husband? You wouldn't dare!

Mrs. E.: Dare! Oh! to save you from the abyss into which you are falling, there is nothing in the world I would not dare, nothing in the whole world. Here is the letter. Your husband has never read it. He never shall read it. [*Going to fireplace.*] It should never have been written. [*Tears it and throws it into the fire.*]

Lady W.: [*With infinite contempt in her voice and look.*] How do I know that that was my letter after all? You seem to think the commonest device can take me in!

Mrs. E.: Oh! why do you disbelieve everything I tell you? What object do you think I have in coming here, except to save you from utter ruin, to save you from the consequence of a hideous mistake? That letter that is burnt now *was* your letter. I swear it to you!

Lady W.: [*Slowly.*] You took good care to burn it before I had examined it. I cannot trust you. You, whose whole life is a lie, how could you speak the truth about anything? [*Sits down.*]

Mrs. E.: [*Hurriedly.*] Think as you like about me—say what you choose against me, but go back, go back to the husband you love.

Lady W.: [*Sullenly.*] I do *not* love him!

Mrs. E.: You do, and you know that he loves you.

Lady W.: He does not understand what love is. He understands it as little as you do—but I see what you want. It would be a great advantage for you to get me back. Dear Heaven! what a life I would have then! Living at the mercy of a woman who has neither mercy nor pity in her, a woman whom it is an infamy to meet, a degradation to know, a vile woman, a woman who comes between husband and wife!

Mrs. E.: [*With a gesture of despair.*] Lady Windermere, Lady Windermere, don't say such terrible things. You don't know how terrible they are, how terrible and how unjust. Listen, you must listen! Only go back to your husband, and I promise you never to communicate with him again on any pretext—never to see him—never to have anything to do with his life or yours. The money that he gave me, he gave me not through love, but through hatred, not in worship, but in contempt. The hold I have over him—

Lady W.: [*Rising.*] Ah! you admit you have a hold!

Mrs. E.: Yes, and I will tell you what it is. It is his love for you, Lady Windermere.

Lady W.: You expect me to believe that?

Mrs. E.: You must believe it! It is true. It is his love for you that has made him submit to—oh! call it what you like, tyranny, threats, anything you

choose. But it is his love for you. His desire to spare you—shame, yes, shame and disgrace.

Lady W.: What do you mean? You are insolent! What have I to do with you?

Mrs. E.: [*Humbly.*] Nothing. I know it—but I tell you that your husband loves you—that you may never meet with such love again in your whole life—that such love you will never meet—and that if you throw it away, the day may come when you will starve for love and it will not be given to you, beg for love and it will be denied you—Oh! Arthur loves you!

Lady W.: Arthur? And you tell me there is nothing between you?

Mrs. E.: Lady Windermere, before Heaven your husband is guiltless of all offence towards you! And I—I tell you that had it ever occurred to me that such a monstrous suspicion would have entered your mind, I would have died rather than have crossed your life or his—oh! died, gladly died! [*Moves away to sofa R.*]

Lady W.: You talk as if you had a heart. Women like you have no hearts. Heart is not in you. You are bought and sold. [*Sits L.C.*]

Mrs. E.: [*Starts, with a gesture of pain. Then restrains herself, and comes over to where Lady Windermere is sitting. As she speaks, she stretches out her hands towards her, but does not dare to touch her.*] Believe what you choose about me. I am not worth a moment's sorrow. But don't spoil your beautiful young life on my account! You don't know what may be in store for you, unless you leave this house at once. You don't know what it is to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at—to be an outcast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed. You don't know what it is. One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays. You must never know that.—As for me, if suffering be an expiation, then at this moment I have expiated all my faults, whatever they have been; for to-night you have made a heart in one who had it not, made it and broken it.—But let that pass. I may have wrecked my own life, but I will not let you wreck yours. You—why, you are a mere girl, you would be lost. You haven't got the kind of brains that enables a woman to get back. You have neither the wit nor the courage. You couldn't stand dishonour! No! Go back, Lady Windermere, to the husband who loves you, whom you love. You have a child, Lady Windermere. Go back to that child who even now, in pain or in joy, may be calling to you. [*Lady Windermere rises.*] God gave you that child. He will require from you that you make his life fine, that you watch over him. What answer will you make to God if his life is ruined through you? Back to your house, Lady Windermere—your husband loves you! He has never swerved for a moment from the love he bears you. But even if he had a thousand loves, you must stay with your child. If he was harsh to you, you must stay with your child. If he ill-treated you, you must stay with your child. If he abandoned you, your place is with your child. [*Lady Windermere bursts into tears and buries her face in her hands.*] [*Rushing to her.*] Lady Windermere!

Lady W. [*Holding out her hands to her, helplessly, as a child might do.*] Take me home. Take me home.

Mrs. E. [*Is about to embrace her. Then restrains herself. There is a look of wonderful joy in her face.*] Come! Where is your cloak? [*Getting it from sofa.*] Here. Put it on. Come at once! [*They go to the door.*]

Lady W.: Stop! Don't you hear voices?

Mrs. E. No, no! There is no one!

himself, I admit I would have gone back to the life of degradation you and he had prepared for me—I was going back—but to stay himself at home, and to send you as his messenger—oh! it was infamous—infamous.

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Mrs. E.: [*Starts, with a gesture of pain. Then restrains herself, and comes over to where Lady Windermere is sitting. As she speaks, she stretches out her hands towards her, but does not dare to touch her.*] Believe what you choose about me. I am not worth a moment's sorrow. But don't spoil your beautiful young life on my account! You don't know what may be in store for you, unless you leave this house at once. You don't know what it is to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at—to be an outcast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed. You don't know what it is. One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays. You must never know that.—As for me, if suffering be an expiation, then at this moment I have expiated all my faults, whatever they have been; for to-night you have made a heart in one who had it not, made it and broken it.—But let that pass. I may have wrecked my own life, but I will not let you wreck yours. You—why, you are a mere girl, you would be lost. You haven't got the kind of brains that enables a woman to get back. You have neither the wit nor the courage. You couldn't stand dishonour! No! Go back, Lady Windermere, to the husband who loves you, whom you love. You have a child, Lady Windermere. Go back to that child who even now, in pain or in joy, may be calling to you. [*Lady Windermere rises.*] God gave you that child. He will require from you that you make his life fine, that you watch over him. What answer will you make to God if his life is ruined through you? Back to your house, Lady Windermere—your husband loves you! He has never swerved for a moment from the love he bears you. But even if he had a thousand loves, you must stay with your child. If he was harsh to you, you must stay with your child. If he ill-treated you, you must stay with your child. If he abandoned you, your place is with your child. [*Lady Windermere bursts into tears and buries her face in her hands.*] [*Rushing to her.*] Lady Windermere!

Lady W.: [*Holding out her hands to her, helplessly, as a child might do.*] Take me home. Take me home.

Mrs. E.: [*Is about to embrace her. Then restrains herself. There is a look of wonderful joy in her face.*] Come! Where is your cloak? [*Getting it from sofa.*] Here. Put it on. Come at once! [*They go to the door.*]

Lady W.: Stop! Don't you hear voices?

Mrs. E.: No, no! There is no one!

Lady W.: Yes, there is! Listen! Oh! that is my husband's voice! He is coming in! Save me! Oh, it's some plot! You have sent for him. [*Voices outside.*]

Mrs. E.: Silence! I'm here to save you, if I can. But I fear it is too late! There! [*Points to the curtain across the window.*] The first chance you have, slip out, if you ever get a chance!

Lady W.: But you?

Mrs. E.: Oh! never mind me. I'll face them. [*Lady Windermere hides herself behind the curtain.*]

Lord A.: [*Outside.*] Nonsense, dear Windermere, you must not leave me!

Mrs E.: Lord Augustus! Then it is I who am lost! [*Hesitates for a moment, then looks round and sees door R., and exit through it.*] [*Enter Lord Darlington, Mr. Dumby, Lord Windermere, Lord Augustus Lorton, and Mr. Cecil Graham.*]

Dumby: What a nuisance their turning us out of the club at this hour! It's only two o'clock. [*Sinks into a chair.*] The lively part of the evening is only just beginning. [*Yawns and closes his eyes.*]

Lord W.: It is very good of you, Lord Darlington, allowing Augustus to force our company on you, but I'm afraid I can't stay long.

Lord D.: Really! I am so sorry! You'll take a cigar, won't you?

Lord W.: Thanks! [*Sits down.*]

Lord A.: [*To Lord Windermere.*] My dear boy, you must not dream of going. I have a great deal to talk to you about, of demmed importance, too. [*Sits down with him at L. table.*]

Cecil G.: Oh! We all know what that is! Tuppy can't talk about anything but Mrs. Erlynne!

Lord W.: Well, that is no business of yours, is it, Cecil?

Cecil G.: None! That is why it interests me. My own business always bores me to death. I prefer other people's.

Lord D.: Have something to drink, you fellows. Cecil, you'll have a whiskey and soda?

Cecil G.: Thanks. [*Goes to table with Lord Darlington.*] Mrs. Erlynne looked very handsome to-night, didn't she?

Lord D.: I am not one of her admirers.

Cecil G.: I usen't to be, but I am now. Why! she actually made me introduce her to poor dear Aunt Caroline. I believe she is going to lunch there.

Lord D.: [*In surprise.*] No?

Cecil G.: She is, really.

Lord D.: Excuse me, you fellows. I'm going away to-morrow. And I have to write a few letters. [*Goes to writing table and sits down.*]

D.: Clever woman, Mrs. Erlynne.

Cecil G.: Hallo, Dumby! I thought you were asleep.

D.: I am, I usually am!

Lord A.: A very clever woman. Knows perfectly well what a demmed fool I am—knows it as well as I do myself. [*Cecil Graham comes towards him laughing.*] Ah, you may laugh, my boy, but it is a great thing to come across a woman who thoroughly understands one.

D.: It is an awfully dangerous thing. They always end by marrying one.

Cecil G.: But I thought, Tuppy, you were never going to see her again! Yes! you told me so yesterday evening at the club. You said you'd heard—[*Whispering to him.*]

Lord A.: Oh, she's explained that.

Cecil G.: And the Wiesbaden affair?

Lord A.: She's explained that too.

Dumby: And her income, Tuppy? Has she explained that?

Lord A.: [*In a very serious voice.*] She's going to explain that to-morrow. [*Cecil Graham goes back to C. table.*]

D.: Awfully commercial, women nowadays. Our grandmothers threw their caps over the mills, of course, but by Jove, their granddaughters only throw their caps over mills that can raise the wind for them.

Lord A.: You want to make her out a wicked woman. She is not!

Cecil G.: Oh! Wicked women bother

one. Good women bore one. That is the only difference between them

Lord A.: [*Puffing a cigar.*] Mrs. Erlynne has a future before her.

D.: Mrs Erlynne has a past before her.

Lord A.: I prefer women with a past. They're always so demmed amusing to talk to

Cecil G.: Well, you'll have lots of topics of conversation with *her*, Tuppy. [*Rising and going to him.*]

Lord A.: You're getting annoying, dear boy; you're getting demmed annoying

Cecil G.: [*Puts his hands on his shoulders.*] Now, Tuppy, you've lost your figure and you've lost your character. Don't lose your temper; you have only got one.

Lord A.: My dear boy, if I wasn't the most good-natured man in London—

Cecil G.: We'd treat you with more respect, wouldn't we, Tuppy? [*Strolls away.*]

D.: The youth of the present day are quite monstrous. They have absolutely no respect for dyed hair. [*Lord Augustus looks round angrily.*]

Cecil G.: Mrs. Erlynne has a very great respect for dear Tuppy.

D.: Then Mrs. Erlynne sets an admirable example to the rest of her sex. It is perfectly brutal the way most women nowadays behave to men who are not their husbands.

Lord W.: Dumby, you are ridiculous, and Cecil, you let your tongue run away with you You must leave Mrs. Erlynne alone You don't really know anything about her, and you're always talking scandal against her

Cecil G.: [*Coming towards him L C*] My dear Arthur, I never talk scandal. *I* only talk gossip

Lord W.: What is the difference between scandal and gossip?

Cecil G.: Oh! gossip is charming! History is merely gossip But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality Now, I never moralise. A man who moralises is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralises is invariably plain. There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a Nonconformist conscience. And most women know it, I'm glad to say.

Lord A.: Just my sentiments, dear boy, just my sentiments.

Cecil G.: Sorry to hear it, Tuppy; whenever people agree with me, I always feel I must be wrong

Lord A.: My dear boy, when I was your age—

Cecil G.: But you never were, Tuppy, and you never will be. [*Goes up C.*] I say, Darlington, let us have some cards. You'll play, Arthur, won't you?

Lord W.: No, thanks, Cecil.

D.: [*With a sigh.*] Good heavens! how marriage ruins a man! It's as demoralising as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

Cecil G.: You'll play, of course, Tuppy?

Lord A.: [*Pouring himself out a brandy and soda at table.*] Can't, dear boy. Promised Mrs Erlynne never to play or drink again.

Cecil G.: Now, my dear Tuppy, don't be led astray into the paths of virtue. Reformed, you would be perfectly tedious. That is the worst of women. They always want one to be good And if we are good, when they meet us, they don't love us at all. They like to find us quite irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite unattractively good.

Lord D.: [*Rising from R. table, where he has been writing letters.*] They always do find us bad!

D.: I don't think we are bad I think we are all good, except Tuppy.

Lord D.: No, we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars [*Sits down at C. table.*]

D.: We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars? Upon my word, you are very romantic to-night, Darlington.

Cecil G.: Too romantic! You must be in love. Who is the girl?

Lord D.: The woman I love is not free, or thinks she isn't. [*Glances instinctively at Lord Windermere while he speaks.*]

Cecil G.: A married woman, then! Well, there's nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It's a thing no married man knows anything about.

Lord D.: Oh! she doesn't love me. She is a good woman. She is the only good woman I have ever met in my life.

Cecil G.: The only good woman you have ever met in your life?

Lord D.: Yes!

Cecil G.: [*Lighting a cigarette.*] Well, you are a lucky fellow! Why, I have met hundreds of good women. I never seem to meet any but good women. The world is perfectly packed with good women. To know them is a middle-class education.

Lord D.: This woman has purity and innocence. She has everything we men have lost.

Cecil G.: My dear fellow, what on earth should we men do going about with purity and innocence? A carefully thought-out buttonhole is much more effective.

D.: She doesn't really love you then?

Lord D.: No, she does not!

D.: I congratulate you, my dear fellow. In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst, the last is a real tragedy! But I am interested to hear she does not love you. How long could you love a woman who didn't love you, Cecil?

Cecil G.: A woman who didn't love me? Oh, all my life!

D.: So could I. But it's so difficult to meet one.

Lord D.: How can you be so conceited, Dumby?

D.: I didn't say it as a matter of conceit. I said it as a matter of regret. I have been wildly, madly adored. I am sorry I have. It has been an immense nuisance. I should like to be allowed a little time to myself now and then.

Lord A.: [*Looking round.*] Time to educate yourself, I suppose.

D.: No, time to forget all I have learned. That is much more important, dear Tuppy. [*Lord Augustus moves uneasily in his chair.*]

Lord D.: What cynics you fellows are!

Cecil G.: What is a cynic? [*Sitting on the back of the sofa.*]

Lord D.: A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Cecil G.: And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

Lord D.: You always amuse me, Cecil. You talk as if you were a man of experience.

Cecil G.: I am. [*Moves up to front of fireplace.*]

Lord D.: You are far too young!

Cecil G.: That is a great error. Experience is a question of instinct about life. I have got it. Tuppy hasn't. Experience is the name Tuppy gives to his mistakes. That is all. [*Lord Augustus looks round indignantly.*]

D.: Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes.

Cecil G.: [*Standing with his back to the fireplace.*] One shouldn't commit any. [*Sees Lady Windermere's fan on sofa.*]

D.: Life would be very dull without them.

Cecil G.: Of course you are quite faithful to this woman you are in love with, Darlington, to this good woman?

Lord D.: Cecil, if one really loves a woman, all other women in the world become absolutely meaningless to one. Love changes one—*I* am changed.

Cecil G.: Dear me! How very interesting! Tuppy, I want to talk to you. [*Lord Augustus takes no notice.*]

D.: It's no use talking to Tuppy. You might just as well talk to a brick wall.

Cecil G.: But I like talking to a brick

wall—it's the only thing in the world that never contradicts me! Tuppy!

Lord A.: Well, what is it? What is it? [*Rising and going over to Cecil Graham.*]

Cecil G.: Come over here. I want you particularly. [*Aside.*] Darlington has been moralising and talking about the purity of love, and that sort of thing, and he has got some woman in his rooms all the time.

Lord A.: No, really! really!

Cecil G.: [*In a low voice.*] Yes, here is her fan. [*Points to the fan.*]

Lord A.: [*Chuckling.*] By Jove! By Jove!

Lord W.: [*Up by door.*] I am really off now, Lord Darlington. I am sorry you are leaving England so soon. Pray call on us when you come back! My wife and I will be charmed to see you!

Lord D.: [*Up stage with Lord Windermere.*] I am afraid I shall be away for many years. Good-night!

Cecil G.: Arthur!

Lord W.: What?

Cecil G.: I want to speak to you for a moment. No, do come!

Lord W.: [*Putting on his coat.*] I can't—I'm off!

Cecil G.: It is something very particular. It will interest you enormously.

Lord W.: [*Smiling.*] It is some of your nonsense, Cecil.

Cecil G.: It isn't! It isn't really.

Lord A.: [*Going to him.*] My dear fellow, you mustn't go yet. I have a lot to talk to you about. And Cecil has something to show you.

Lord W.: [*Walking over.*] Well, what is it?

Cecil G.: Darlington has got a woman here in his rooms. Here is her fan. Amusing, isn't it? [*A pause.*]

Lord W.: Good God! [*Seizes the fan—Dumby rises.*]

Cecil G.: What is the matter?

Lord W.: Lord Darlington!

Lord D.: [*Turning round.*] Yes!

Lord W.: What is my wife's fan doing here in your rooms? Hands off, Cecil. Don't touch me.

Lord D.: Your wife's fan?

Lord W.: Yes, here it is!

Lord D.: [*Walking towards him.*] I don't know!

Lord W.: You must know. I demand an explanation. Don't hold me, you fool. [*To Cecil Graham.*]

Lord D.: [*Aside.*] She is here after all!

Lord W.: Speak, sir! Why is my wife's fan here? Answer me! By God! I'll search your rooms, and if my wife's here, I'll—[*Moves.*]

Lord D.: You shall not search my rooms. You have no right to do so. I forbid you!

Lord W.: You scoundrel! I'll not leave your room till I have searched every corner of it! What moves behind that curtain? [*Rushes towards the curtain C.*]

Mrs. E.: [*Enters behind R.*] Lord Windermere!

Lord W.: Mrs. Erlynne! [*Every one starts and turns round. Lady Windermere slips out from behind the curtain and glides from the room L.*]

Mrs. E.: I am afraid I took your wife's fan in mistake for my own, when I was leaving your house to-night. I am so sorry. [*Takes fan from him. Lord Windermere looks at her in contempt. Lord Darlington in mingled astonishment and anger. Lord Augustus turns away. The other men smile at each other.*]

NOTES ON ACT III

The Rhythm of Act III. Like Act II, Act III has several climactic points. What are they? How are they related to each other? How does Wilde work up to each one? Do we find any relaxation of tension after each climactic point, as in Act II? Is there any alternation of moods, as in Act II? Note

the rather long witty passage between the arrival of the men and Cecil's discovery of the fan. Is this waste motion—simply so much repartee? Does the dialogue have any bearing on the theme? Is there, beneath the surface of the witty interchange, any contrast in mood? Is this part of the act "relaxed," or could it be argued that the wit itself maintains a kind of intellectual tension? Is this tension different from that of the first half of the Act?

The Melodramatic Tendency; Motivation. Here we see Wilde, though he does make some fight against it, continuing in his drift toward melodrama. For in general Act III goes on with a last-minute rescue, managed largely by forces *outside* the person being rescued; the force of which we see most is Mrs. E.'s resourcefulness. Lady W. does, of course, help to save herself. There is a real conflict between her and Mrs. E., she acquires new insight and undergoes a definite growth, and thus we have a genuine dramatic action. The ironic assurance with which Lady W. misjudges the intentions of Mrs. E. is an important part of the dramatic effect. There are, however, two ways in which the action might have produced a more profound sense of drama. If Lady W., with her ironic misunderstanding, had actually run away with Lord D., we would have had to come to grips with more fundamental complications. In that case, Lady W., the essentially good person with the *hamartia* or "tragic flaw" (terms frequently encountered in dramatic criticism), might have resembled closely the tragic "hero" defined by Aristotle (see Glossary). On the other hand, Act III might have been a very important step in a study of the growth of character of Mrs. Erlynne. But that purpose would have required a completely different orientation or "focus" (for a fuller discussion of this term, see the Glossary), with Mrs. E. in the central position and Lady W. "played down." The fact that our attention is now divided somewhat between the two indicates some lack of focus, some failure to get down to the basic problem of either of them.

Wilde, however, appears to prefer external complications. If he had wished to focus attention on Lady W.'s inner struggle, he might just as well—and perhaps better—have done it without all the to-do at Lord Darlington's, which shifts attention from the problem to the rescue. With his technical ingenuity, Wilde could certainly have managed to bring Lady W. and Mrs. E. together at Lady W.'s place. But he had evidently predetermined to have the excitement at Lord D's. Now notice all the difficulties he runs into in carrying out this plan.

First, he has no real reason for keeping Lord D. away from his apartment; indeed, we might expect him to be at home preparing to "leave England" next day. Second, Wilde has to rely on the accidental discovery of the letter to get Mrs. Erlynne to Lord D.'s apartment. Third, he has to rely on the accident of the men's arriving just at the climax of the scene between the women. Fourth, Wilde has no workable explanation of how the men happen to be there at all. Dumby says that they were put out of a club and that Lord Augustus "forced" them on Lord D., but *why* should

it be Lord D. rather than someone else, and *how* could Lord Augustus, of all people, successfully do the forcing? Fifth, in order to have a double concealment, Wilde makes Mrs. Erlynne hide from Lord Augustus—although we have previously seen Mrs. Erlynne masterfully controlling Lord Augustus, and Lord Augustus overcome by Mrs. Erlynne's skill in explaining things.

Here we see a dramatist battling with certain problems of time and place, which we spoke about earlier in Part I (see p. 29). When he does not handle them very plausibly, we have a sense of poor *motivation*. Many readers will feel that here Wilde has arbitrarily decided on a certain type of scene and then has had to resort too much to trickery and unsubtle manipulation to bring it about.

A concealment scene may be used for legitimate and even brilliant dramatic effects, as we shall see when we come to read Sheridan's *School for Scandal.* Though we cannot now compare the two, we may suggest one or two contrasts. Note that, since none of Wilde's characters on the stage knows that anyone else is present, there can be none of the interaction which is a basic element in the corresponding Sheridan scene. Hence Wilde's scene is thinner, less dynamic; it is one-dimensional. Further, since the concealed women can actually *learn* nothing from what they overhear, the conversation on the stage can have no effect on them. Hence the scene depends for its effect entirely upon the possibility of discovery of the concealed persons. No real question of *character* is involved. The threat of discovery, the stress on the hairbreadth escape—this is the mood of melodrama, and to do him justice, Wilde makes the most of the possibility. Note how Wilde multiplies the threats in the last several pages of the scene. It is this rapid-fire series of thrills toward which he has directed the whole act. Does it not seem, in the long run, however, that to gain such an effect he has had to stay on a rather superficial level and proceed by too artificial means?

The Mother-Daughter Coincidence. The most striking coincidence is of course the resemblance between the experiences of mother and daughter, and the fact that the mother is present to aid her daughter at the critical moment. The danger here is that the author will seem to be more intent on a startling resemblance than on a study of character (for a comment on a somewhat similar handling of materials see the discussion of Somerset Maugham's *The Circle* in Appendix A). Wilde tries to reduce this danger in various ways: (1) By carefully preparing us for the fact that Mrs. Erlynne is Lady W.'s mother, he has endeavored to reduce the sense of *surprise* which would tend to reinforce our feeling that the situation is purely coincidental. (2) By introducing the irony of Lady W.'s unjustly suspecting Lord W. of having an affair with Mrs. Erlynne, he suggests that he is interested in more than a duplication for its own sake (3) By making the experiences of mother and daughter come out very differently he reduces the appearance of having an improbable repetition. (4) By not making Mrs. Erlynne known to Lady W. he eliminates possible sentimental effects.

hence we are somewhat the more willing to acquit him of the charge of giving us a put-up job.

It is possible that Wilde, if questioned, would have justified his risk—of seeming to derive his major effects from an improbable coincidence—in this way. Lady W. is too inflexible and doctrinaire in her judgments. She can learn only from someone of wider experience. But it is precisely the person of worldly experience to whom she will not listen. Hence such a person must gain Lady W.'s trust by some striking act of devotion. This act of devotion, Wilde might argue, could be performed only by someone with maternal protectiveness and unselfishness. How plausible would you find this case?

FOURTH ACT

[SCENE. Same as in Act I.]

Lady W.: [*Lying on sofa.*] How can I tell him? I can't tell him. It would kill me. I wonder what happened after I escaped from that horrible room. Perhaps she told them the true reason of her being there, and the real meaning of that—fatal fan of mine. Oh, if he knows—how can I look him in the face again? He would never forgive me. [*Touches bell.*] How securely one thinks one lives—out of reach of temptation, sin, folly. And then suddenly—Oh! Life is terrible. It rules us, we do not rule it. [*Enter Rosalie R.*]

Rosalie: Did your ladyship ring for me?

Lady W.: Yes. Have you found out at what time Lord Windermere came in last night?

R.: His lordship did not come in till five o'clock.

Lady W.: Five o'clock? He knocked at my door this morning, didn't he?

R.: Yes, my lady—at half-past nine. I told him your ladyship was not awake yet.

Lady W.: Did he say anything?

R.: Something about your ladyship's fan. I didn't quite catch what his lordship said. Has the fan been lost, my lady? I can't find it, and Parker says it was not left in any of the rooms. He has looked in all of them and on the terrace as well.

Lady W.: It doesn't matter. Tell Parker not to trouble. That will do. [*Exit Rosalie.*]

Lady W.: [*Rising.*] She is sure to tell him. I can fancy a person doing a wonderful act of self-sacrifice, doing it spontaneously, recklessly, nobly—and afterwards finding out that it costs too much. Why should she hesitate between her ruin and mine? . . . How strange! I would have publicly disgraced her in my own house. She accepts public disgrace in the house of another to save me. . . . There is a bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way we talk of good and bad women. . . . Oh, what a lesson! and what a pity that in life we only get our lessons when they are of no use to us! For even if she doesn't tell, I must. Oh! the shame of it, the shame of it. To tell it is to live through it all again. Actions are the first tragedy in life, words are the second. Words are perhaps the worst. Words are merciless. . . . Oh! [*Starts as Lord Windermere enters.*]

Lord W.: [*Kisses her.*] Margaret—how pale you look!

Lady W.: I slept very badly.

Lord W.: [*Sitting on sofa with her.*] I am so sorry. I came in dreadfully late, and didn't like to wake you. You are crying, dear.

Lady W.: Yes, I am crying, for I have something to tell you, Arthur.

Lord W.: My dear child, you are not well. You've been doing too much. Let us go away to the country. You'll be all right at Selby. The season is almost over.

I'll send a wire to Fannen. [*Crosses and sits down at table to write a telegram.*]

Lady W.: Yes; let us go away to-day. No; I can't go to-day, Arthur. There is some one I must see before I leave town—some one who has been kind to me.

Lord W.: [*Rising and leaning over sofa.*] Kind to you?

Lady W.: Far more than that. [*Rises and goes to him.*] I will tell you, Arthur, but only love me, love me as you used to love me.

Lord W.: Used to? You are not thinking of that wretched woman who came here last night? [*Coming round and sitting R. of her.*] You don't still imagine—no, you couldn't.

Lady W.: I don't. I know now I was wrong and foolish.

Lord W.: It was very good of you to receive her last night—but you are never to see her again.

Lady W.: Why do you say that? [*A pause.*]

Lord W.: [*Holding her hand.*] Margaret, I thought Mrs. Erlynne was a woman more sinned against than sinning, as the phrase goes. I thought she wanted to be good, to get back into a place that she had lost by a moment's folly, to lead again a decent life. I believed what she told me—I was mistaken in her. She is bad—as bad as a woman can be.

Lady W.: Arthur, Arthur, don't talk so bitterly about any woman. I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad moods of recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. And I don't think Mrs. Erlynne a bad woman—I know she's not.

Lord W.: My dear child, the woman's impossible. No matter what harm she tries to do us, you must never see her again. She is inadmissible anywhere.

Lady W.: But I want to see her. I want her to come here.

Lord W.: Never!

Lady W.: She came here once as *your* guest. She must come now as *mine*. That is but fair.

Lord W.: She should never have come here.

Lady W.: [*Rising.*] It is too late, Arthur, to say that now. [*Moves away.*]

Lord W.: [*Rising.*] Margaret, if you knew where Mrs. Erlynne went last night, after she left this house, you would not sit in the same room with her. It was absolutely shameless, the whole thing.

Lady W.: Arthur, I can't bear it any longer. I must tell you. Last night—[*Enter Parker with a tray on which lie Lady Windermere's fan and a card.*]

P.: Mrs. Erlynne has called to return your ladyship's fan which she took away by mistake last night. Mrs. Erlynne has written a message on the card.

Lady W.: Oh, ask Mrs. Erlynne to be kind enough to come up. [*Reads card.*] Say I shall be very glad to see her. [*Exit Parker.*] She wants to see me, Arthur.

Lord W.: [*Takes card and looks at it.*] Margaret, I *beg* you not to. Let me see her first, at any rate. She's a very dangerous woman. She is the most dangerous woman I know. You don't realise what you're doing.

Lady W.: It is right that I should see her.

Lord W.: My child, you may be on the brink of a great sorrow. Don't go to meet it. It is absolutely necessary that I should see her before you do.

Lady W.: Why should it be necessary? [*Enter Parker.*]

P.: Mrs. Erlynne. [*Enter Mrs. Erlynne.*] [*Exit Parker.*]

Mrs. E.: How do you do, Lady Windermere? [*To Lord Windermere.*] How

Margaret is twenty-one, and I have never admitted that I am more than twenty-nine, or thirty at the most. Twenty-nine when there are pink shades, thirty when there are not. So you see what difficulties it would involve. No, as far as I am concerned, let your wife cherish the memory of this dead, stainless mother. Why should I interfere with her illusions? I find it hard enough to keep my own. I lost one illusion last night. I thought I had no heart. I find I have, and a heart doesn't suit me, Windermere. Somehow it doesn't go with modern dress. It makes one look old. [*Takes up hand-mirror from table and looks into it.*] And it spoils one's career at critical moments.

Lord W.: You fill me with horror—with absolute horror.

Mrs. E.: [*Rising.*] I suppose, Windermere, you would like me to retire into a convent, or become a hospital nurse, or something of that kind, as people do in silly modern novels. That is stupid of you, Arthur; in real life we don't do such things—not as long as we have any good looks left, at any rate. No—what consoles one nowadays is not repentance, but pleasure. Repentance is quite out of date. And besides, if a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her. And nothing in the world would induce me to do that. No; I am going to pass entirely out of your two lives. My coming into them has been a mistake—I discovered that last night.

Lord W.: A fatal mistake.

Mrs. E.: [*Smiling.*] Almost fatal.

Lord W.: I am sorry now I did not tell my wife the whole thing at once.

Mrs. E.: I regret my bad actions. You regret your good ones—that is the difference between us.

Lord W.: I don't trust you. I *will* tell my wife. It's better for her to know, and from me. It will cause her infinite pain—it will humiliate her terribly, but it's right that she should know.

Mrs. E.: You propose to tell her?

Lord W.: I am going to tell her.

Mrs. E.: [*Going up to him.*] If you do, I will make my name so infamous that it will mar every moment of her life. It will ruin her, and make her wretched. If you dare to tell her, there is no depth of degradation I will not sink to, no pit of shame I will not enter. You shall not tell her—I forbid you.

Lord W.: Why?

Mrs. E.: [*After a pause.*] If I said to you that I cared for her, perhaps loved her even—you would sneer at me, wouldn't you?

Lord W.: I should feel it was not true. A mother's love means devotion, unselfishness, sacrifice. What could you know of such things?

Mrs. E.: You are right. What could I know of such things? Don't let us talk any more about it—as for telling my daughter who I am, that I do not allow. It is my secret, it is not yours. If I make up my mind to tell her, and I think I will, I shall tell her before I leave the house—if not, I shall never tell her.

Lord W.: [*Angrily.*] Then let me beg of you to leave our house at once. I will make your excuses to Margaret. [*Enter Lady Windermere R. She goes over to Mrs. Erlynne with the photograph in her hand. Lord Windermere moves to back of sofa, and anxiously watches Mrs. Erlynne as the scene progresses.*]

Lady W.: I am so sorry, Mrs. Erlynne, to have kept you waiting. I couldn't find the photograph anywhere. At last I discovered it in my husband's dressing-room—he had stolen it.

Mrs. E.: [*Takes the photograph from her and looks at it.*] I am not surprised—it is charming. [*Goes over to sofa with Lady Windermere, and sits down beside her. Looks again at the photograph.*] And so that is your little boy! What is he called?

Lady W.: Gerard, after my dear father.

Mrs. E.: [*Laying the photograph down.*] Really?

Lady W.: Yes. If it had been a girl, I would have called it after my mother. My mother had the same name as myself, Margaret.

Mrs. E.: My name is Margaret too.

Lady W.: Indeed!

Mrs. E.: Yes. [*Pause.*] You are devoted to your mother's memory, Lady Windermere, your husband tells me.

Lady W.: We all have ideals in life. At least we all should have. Mine is my mother.

Mrs. E.: Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they're better.

[illegible]

Mrs. E.: Did your father often speak to you of your mother?

Lady W.: No, it gave him too much pain He told me how my mother had died a few months after I was born. His eyes filled with tears as he spoke. Then he begged me never to mention her name to him again. It made him suffer even to hear it. My father—my father really died of a broken heart. His was the most ruined life I know.

Mrs. E.: [*Rising.*] I am afraid I must go now, Lady Windermere.

Lady W.: [*Rising.*] Oh no, don't.

Mrs. E.: I think I had better. My carriage must have come back by this time I sent it to Lady Jedburgh's with a note

Lady W.: Arthur, would you mind seeing if Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come back?

Mrs. E.: Pray don't trouble, Lord Windermere.

Lady W.: Yes, Arthur, do go, please. [*Lord Windermere hesitates for a moment and looks at Mrs. Erlynne. She remains quite impassive. He leaves the room.*] [*To Mrs. Erlynne.*] Oh! What am I to say to you? You saved me last night? [*Goes towards her.*]

Mrs. E.: Hush—don't speak of it.

Lady W.: I must speak of it. I can't let you think that I am going to accept this sacrifice. I am not. It is too great. I am going to tell my husband everything. It is my duty.

Mrs. E.: It is not your duty—at least you have duties to others besides him. You say you owe me something?

Lady W.: I owe you everything.

Mrs. E.: Then pay your debt by silence. That is the only way in which it can be paid. Don't spoil the one good thing I have done in my life by telling it to any one. Promise me that what passed last night will remain a secret between us. You must not bring misery into your husband's life. Why spoil his love? You must not spoil it. Love is easily killed. Oh! how easily love is killed. Pledge me your word, Lady Windermere, that you will *never* tell him. I insist upon it.

Lady W.: [*With bowed head.*] It is your will, not mine.

Mrs. E.: Yes, it is my will. And never forget your child—I like to think of you as a mother. I like you to think of yourself as one.

Lady W.: [*Looking up.*] I always will now. Only once in my life I have forgotten my own mother—that was last night. Oh, if I had remembered her I should not have been so foolish, so wicked.

Mrs. E.: [*With a slight shudder.*] Hush, last night is quite over. [*Enter Lord Windermere.*]

Lord W.: Your carriage has not come back yet, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E.: It makes no matter. I'll take a hansom. There is nothing in the world so respectable as a good Shrewsbury and Talbot And now, dear Lady Windermere, I am afraid it is really goodbye. [*Moves up C.*] Oh, I remember. You'll think me absurd, but do you know I've taken a great fancy to this fan that I was silly enough to run away with last night from your ball Now, I wonder would you give it to me? Lord Windermere says you may. I know it is his present

Lady W.: Oh, certainly, if it will give you any pleasure. But it has my name on it. It has "Margaret" on it.

Mrs. E.: But we have the same Christian name.

Lady W.: Oh, I forgot. Of course, do have it. What a wonderful chance our names being the same!

Mrs. E.: Quite wonderful. Thanks—it will always remind me of you. [*Shakes hands with her.*] [*Enter Parker.*]

P.: Lord Augustus Lorton. Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come. [*Enter Lord Augustus.*]

Lord A.: Good morning, dear boy. Good morning, Lady Windermere. [*Sees Mrs. Erlynne.*] Mrs. Erlynne!

Mrs. E.: How do you do, Lord Augustus? Are you quite well this morning?

Lord A.: [*Coldly.*] Quite well, thank you, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E.: You don't look at all well, Lord Augustus. You stop up too late—it is so bad for you. You really should take more care of yourself. Good-bye, Lord Windermere. [*Goes towards door with a bow to Lord Augustus. Suddenly smiles and looks back at him.*] Lord Augustus! Won't you see me to my carriage? You might carry the fan.

Lord W.: Allow me!

Mrs. E.: No; I want Lord Augustus. I have a special message for the dear Duchess. Won't you carry the fan, Lord Augustus?

Lord A.: If you really desire it, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E.: [*Laughing.*] Of course I do. You'll carry it so gracefully. You would carry off anything gracefully, dear Lord Augustus. [*When she reaches the door she looks back for a moment at Lady Windermere. Their eyes meet. Then she turns, and exit C. followed by Lord Augustus.*]

Lady W.: You will never speak against Mrs. Erlynne again, Arthur, will you?

Lord W.: [*Gravely.*] She is better than one thought her.

Lady W.: She is better than I am.

Lord W.: [*Smiling as he strokes her hair.*] Child, you and she belong to different worlds. Into your world evil has never entered.

Lady W.: Don't say that, Arthur. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

Lord W.: [*Moves down with her.*] Darling, why do you say that?

Lady W.: [*Sits on sofa.*] Because I, who had shut my eyes to life, came to the brink. And one who had separated us—

Lord W.: We were never separated.

Lady W.: We never must be again. O Arthur, don't love me less, and I will trust you more. I will trust you absolutely. Let us go to Selby. In the Rose Garden at Selby the roses are white and red. [*Enter Lord Augustus C.*]

Lord A.: Arthur, she has explained everything! [*Lady Windermere looks horribly frightened at this. Lord Windermere starts. Lord Augustus takes Windermere by the arm and brings him to front of stage. He talks rapidly and in a low voice. Lady Windermere stands watching them in terror.*] My dear fellow, she has explained every demmed thing. We all wronged her immensely. It was entirely for my sake she went to Darlington's rooms. Called first at the Club—fact is, wanted to put me out of suspense—and being told I had gone on—followed—naturally frightened when she heard a lot of us coming in—retired to another room—I assure you, most gratifying to me, the whole thing. We all behaved brutally to her. She is just the woman for me. Suits me down to the ground. All the conditions she makes are that we live entirely out of England. A very good thing too. Demmed clubs, demmed climate, demmed cooks, demmed everything. Sick of it all!

Lady W.: [*Frightened.*] Has Mrs. Erlynne—?

Lord A.: [Advancing towards her with a low bow.] Yes, Lady Windermere—Mrs. Erlynne has done me the honour of accepting my hand.

Lord W.: Well, you are certainly marrying a very clever woman!

Lady W.: [Taking her husband's hand.] Ah, you're marrying a very good woman!

NOTES ON ACT IV

Wilde's Problems; Further Melodramatic Effects. Wilde's main problem in Act IV is that his play largely ended with Act III. What is left is largely a post-mortem, which has few dramatic possibilities. Hence Wilde must squeeze the materials dry to make the Act seem dramatic. Lady W.'s basic decision has been made, and the only problem left is that her husband may find out about her escapade. But this is only a matter of possible discomfort, not a real [illegible] in without getting off [illegible] Lord W.'s finding out [illegible] same time, however, Wilde ignores one subject that appears to call for treatment: why does Lord W. have no curiosity about his wife's change of attitude to Mrs. E.?

For suspense, too, Wilde introduces the possibility that Lady W. may find out who Mrs. E. is—another unreal threat. It is too late for the new theme that the identification would introduce. (Moreover, such a recognition scene is almost incurably melodramatic.) To secure a clash between Mrs. E. and Lord W. he makes Lord W. undergo an unmotivated change [illegible] W.; a little later Wilde reverses [illegible] at the possibility that Mrs. E. [illegible] to keep up a sense of clash in Act IV, Wilde appears to move Lord W. around very arbitrarily. Con[illegible] attitude to Mrs. Erlynne: we do not find [illegible] condemnation of her, a condemnation so [illegible] lier attacks on the hasty conclusions of others. So we constantly feel that he is angry without due cause. (One is almost tempted to suggest that Wilde has used him merely because he felt that an angry man would tone up the act.)

In reversing the feelings of both husband and wife to Mrs. Erlynne, Wilde is obviously striving for an ironic effect. But do we not feel that the irony is forced? That the reversal is too perfect? Are there any other instances of overplayed irony in the Act? Consider the speech in which Lord W. says to Mrs. E., "I should feel it was not true, etc." and that in which Lady W. says to Mrs. E., "Only once in my life have I forgotten my own mother—" (p. 70b, 16 ff.; p. 71b, 28 ff.).

Mrs. Erlynne's Part in Act IV. The only matter that is still dramatically incomplete is the fate of Mrs. Erlynne; perhaps Wilde could have secured his most solid dramatic effect by restricting Act IV to her and Lady W. At any rate, note certain aspects of Wilde's use of Mrs. Erlynne. (1) What

change of tone occurs after she comes on the stage? Does her wit make for triviality after the heaviness of the Windermeres' dialogue? What is the effect of such a speech as this: "And, besides, if a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her"? (2) Wilde wishes Mrs. Erlynne to have separate interviews with both husband and wife. Do his devices for getting one or the other off the stage seem natural or labored? (3) Note several aspects of Lord Augustus's part in the Act. From one point of view, we have here another unmotivated entrance. On the other hand, the episode is very useful symbolically: it tells us again that Mrs. Erlynne can be convincing to part of society, enough so to achieve a comfortable *modus vivendi*. Lord Augustus is not an ideal catch, of course; if he were, we could have an inappropriate and unconvincing romantic ending. But to give Mrs. Erlynne a partially satisfactory existence is to avoid, on the other hand, a pathetic or sentimental ending that would be inconsistent with the comic tone which Wilde has adopted.

2. THE PLAY AS A WHOLE

Now that we can see the play as a whole, let us try to pick out some of the general problems faced by the writer of the play. The basic situation, we see, is the conflict between society and an individual who has flouted social conventions. What Wilde had to do first was to transform this vast, abstract subject into a compressed and concrete drama. That is, he had to pick a *specific* situation and impose on it various limitations that would bring it within the boundaries of the conventional play.

THE LIMITATIONS

The social outcast is represented by Mrs. Erlynne. Notice that Wilde has room only for the outcast who wants to get back into society and does something about it. There is no room for outcasts who are crushed or indifferent or resigned or inactive; nor do we see anything of Mrs. Erlynne's associates in exile. We see her only in her relation to society.

Further, we see that relationship exhibited in only one episode, and the episode centers in a single event, Lady Windermere's ball. Not only the action, but also the time and space are cut down: all the action takes place within twenty-four hours, and the events of three acts take place in one house. In order to see what a cut-down, specialized situation we have here, we have only to imagine how much time before and after the ball a movie or a novel would include (perhaps presenting directly Mrs. Erlynne's elopement of twenty years before), and how much movement in space they would show. This play illustrates, then, the general dramatic practice of cutting out everything but the climax of a situation.

The method offers special difficulties and special advantages. For one thing, the dramatist must make it plausible that so much crucial action should take place in so short a time. It is not easy to convince an

audience that a prim Victorian lady will in a few hours' time decide to desert her husband. But under the high pressure which the drama maintains we do not seriously question the decision.

The nature of drama itself helps us out; for within its limits an unusually high tension can be maintained and an acceleration of the normal everyday tempo of life is not only natural but inevitable.

THE SYMBOLIC SITUATION

We are further helped in accepting this compressed action by the fact that we see it as *symbolic* action. Not that the play is primarily symbolic, but that the actions do become more than mere elements in a sequence. For instance, Lady W.'s ball symbolizes society in action; Mrs. E.'s experience there will symbolize her acceptance or rejection by society. Drama, [illegible] only a very few of the complications which make up [illegible] our grasping the symbolic import of what it does pre[illegible] matist must find situations capable of taking on symbolic signific[illegible], for instance, Mrs Erlynne simply called on Lady W. instead of coming to her party, it would be far more difficult to invest the episode with symbolic significance.

THE AUTHOR'S ATTITUDE

Thus far we have been considering the play almost entirely from the point of view of problems in *technique*, that is, relatively *mechanical* necessities and devices. And a very important problem still remains—a problem which is by no means separate from those already considered but which grows out of them. This is the problem of the meaning of the play. What is Wilde "saying"? How does he want us to feel about various characters? How can we discover his "attitude" toward them? To answer these questions we shall have to continue our consideration of how Wilde manages various mechanical aspects of the play. We are not so much changing our subject, perhaps, as shifting emphasis. In earlier sections we discussed technique from the point of view of theatrical limitations and effect, plausibility, and so on; now we turn to technique as an index of the author's attitude to his materials (see Glossary.)

Then another question comes up: shall we accept his attitude? It is clear that we need not agree with an author, but we certainly owe him a hearing and though he may not bring us to accept his conclusion, he can do certain things to convince us that he is worth a hearing. He can show [illegible] at least a *satisfactory grasp of experience;* that is, whatever [illegible] he sees things with sufficient flexibility, compre[illegible] ency. He can, for instance, guard against our [illegible] simplifying the situation; (2) failing to grasp [illegible] ramifications; (3) arriving at too easy a [illegible] through partisanship.

Now Wilde, in dealing with the conflict between Mrs. E. and society, might take one side and completely justify it. Conceivably he might thus write a successful play, but there would be strong likelihood of our seeing in it not so much a drama as a diatribe, an obvious piece of "poetic justice," or even what we now call propaganda, that is, over-simplification. Wilde clearly tries to avoid this as well as the other charges listed above. How does he go about it?

First of all, what is his view of society? It is very important that Wilde is unwilling to let the Windermeres alone stand for society. Despite the limitations of the dramatic form he provides a rather large number of characters to represent society. To secure this variety he is willing to face the great difficulty of trying to make these representatives of society recognizable as individuals, though none of them can have very large parts, and though he uses for all of them much the same epigrammatic style of speech. We have already seen (at the end of Act I) some of the devices which Wilde uses to distinguish the members of society. In general, how successful is he in meeting this problem?

The Treatment of Society. Wilde, then, prefers other risks to that of the oversimplification of presenting society as all of a piece. Rather, society is complex; it has many internal variations. Lady W. is "a good woman," but Wilde does not oversimplify her either. She is made too sure of herself and of her "hard-and-fast rules"; she is even priggish, as when she says to her husband, "—you should not mention this woman and me in the same breath. It is an error of taste." Thus Wilde informs us that he is not giving her unqualified approval; he is really saying that a strict "goodness" is not enough.

On the other hand we have the Duchess of Berwick, to whom the conventions are not so much the boundaries of right and wrong as they are a set of rules by which to play her own game of realistic power-politics. She delights in controlling her husband, daughter, and prospective son-in-law. With her lack of scruples, she might be a good object for outright satire; yet Wilde also qualifies his treatment of her. Her candor and wit and comic loquacity make her amusing rather than detestable.

Lady Plymdale has a small but very important part: she calls Mrs. Erlynne "*that* woman" but at the same time has contempt for Lady W., "who goes in for being so proper." And in her relations with Dumby it is clear that she is about as free with the moral rules as was Mrs. Erlynne. Then there is Lady Jedburgh, who shows society's susceptibility to flattery.

So society has both its admirable and unadmirable members: it is a complex mixture. In its way, it does the very things (or their equivalent) for which it condemns individuals. Wilde is not going to take the easy way out by either attacking it as a whole or defending it as a whole.

Treatment of Mrs. Erlynne. Nor is Wilde going to make Mrs. Erlynne either an unregenerate sinner or a romantic heroine who glorifies revolt. Wilde first gives us a bad report of her but then modifies it by the fact that Lord W. accepts her and that Lady W. is so unreasonably harsh in con-

demning her. Finally, she performs an act of generous devotion. But Wilde does not sentimentalize her: she has a strong sense of the value of money and a husband, and she can drive a hard bargain with Lord W. and manage Lord A. as suits her convenience. Nor does Wilde exculpate her: she neither denies that she erred nor blames society for ostracizing her. Wilde imposes on her the most severe penalty: her criticism of herself.

Mrs. Erlynne's attitude to society is important: if she were desperately anxious to re-enter a society which Wilde has presented as of somewhat uncertain merit, she would seem very superficial. Therefore, Wilde has her say in Act II (p. 52b, 19–20). "And I see there are just as many fools in society as there used to be." She is sensible and realistic: she sees society not as an end in itself, but, other things being equal, as a means to a more comfortable existence; and, still more important, she can discard this objective if an intrinsically better one makes a demand upon her.

Clearly, Wilde is avoiding a black-and-white world-view and striving for the qualifications needed at the adult level

THE THEME

What, then, is the meaning of a conflict between two sides neither of which is ideal?

Consider the ending Here Mrs Erlynne is presented very sympathetically, and she has won a "victory" in that she has saved her daughter and secured a husband. But she cannot be acknowledged as a mother, and her relationships are so intricate that she has to give up her hope of living in English society. That is, Wilde presents dramatically the working-out of a complex life: neither the "good" nor the "bad" is wholly influential, but both affect the outcome. In a sense, the ending is a *compromise.*

Now notice how Lady W. is included in the compromise: *in fact, it is she* upon whom Wilde focuses our attention. *She has the last line in the play.* "Ah! you're marrying a very good woman" (note the echo (1) of the phrase first applied to Lady W. and (2) of Lord W.'s remark to Mrs. E. earlier in Act IV, "a worthless, vicious woman").

Her compromise is, finally, the chief event of the play. Mrs. Erlynne's primary function has been to provide an object lesson for Lady W.; the play is centered upon Lady W.'s learning process. And what has she learned? Not merely that Mrs. E. is a good woman. But the more general truth that good and evil are not easily determined by simple rules, that they do not often exist in pure form, so to speak, hence one must measure the evidence carefully and must avoid hast[illegible]

As we loo[illegible]
of the dialo[illegible]
to Lady W. [illegible] complex a thing to be settled by these hard-and-fast rules" (p. 37a, 46–48). Then in Act IV Lady W. makes at least three direct applications of this principle. Mrs. Erlynne has shown her that life cannot be judged as simply as it had seemed.

Other Evidence. Other parts of the play help in the education of Lady W. She believes that a wife should not be "vile" because a husband is; yet when she discovers Lord W. in what she supposes is infidelity, she plans to elope with Lord Darlington. Further, when Lord D. proposes elopement, he does not speak in terms of a "hard-and-fast" romantic rule; instead he makes realistic qualifications. "I will not tell you that the world matters nothing," he says, "or the world's voice, or the voice of Society" (p. 50b, 36–38). There is no primrose path, no easy way out. So again the reader is reminded of the theme that all the complexities of a situation must be taken into account.

The Epigrammatic Style. Much of the repartee, of course, exists for its own sake or as a clue to the mind of the speaker, or as clue to the character of someone spoken about, e.g., "Many a woman has a past but I am told that she has at least a dozen, and that they all fit." But notice, on the other hand, that the wit makes a real contribution to the theme, particularly when it takes the form of *paradox*, that is, of turning upside down some conventional or accepted point of view or belief. The paradox implies a questioning, skeptical attitude; it means that the truth is more complex than it may appear at first glance. It helps create an atmosphere suitable to the over-turning of hard-and-fast rules. Consider some of the following epigrammatic lines:

"Oh, nowadays so many conceited people go about society pretending to be good, that I think it shows rather a sweet and modest disposition to pretend to be bad."

"Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out."

'Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it."

"My father would talk morality after dinner. I told him he was old enough to know better."

"The youth of the present day are monstrous. They have absolutely no respect for dyed hair" (What is gained by substituting *dyed hair* for *grey hair* or *age?*)

"In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it."

What we get in such lines is not merely a breath-taking reversal of convention but actually a more complex insight into the truths which lie behind the conventions. It would be a very profitable exercise to make a study of all the wit in the play to see how much it does contribute to the meaning of the play, namely, that satisfactory judgments cannot be made in simple, cut-and-dried terms.

THE NATURE OF COMEDY

This is not the place to attempt a final definition of comedy, for which we need more evidence, but Wilde's play does point the way toward such a definition. Clearly it is not enough to say that this is comedy because it evokes laughter and has a happy ending, for, as Shakespeare shows, there can be laughter in a tragedy; and tragedy itself may on occasion have a

happy ending. Besides, there are perfectly serious plays which are not tragedies. What, then, is the basic element in Wilde's play?

We have seen that Wilde hinges his action on the conventions, but he clearly does not equate the conventions with right—or, for that matter, with wrong. That is, he is not concerned with fundamental problems of [illegible]

vital choices to be made. Note that Lady W. does not have a *real choice* to make between Lord W. and Lord D. because what she desires is identical with what she feels is right: she starts to leave her husband for pique rather than principle, and she returns for practicality rather than principle. She has no decision to make; she is not a moral agent; and so serious issues are evaded.

What are the issues, then? Comfort, reputation, the conventions of society—matters which do not represent permanent values. This is the realm of sociology, of people's attitudes and opinions, which change from place to place and from time to time and hence need not be taken with ultimate seriousness. The problems are those of an external world, the world where matters can be managed and arranged, where compromises can be made, and agreeable solutions arrived at. In terms of this play, this is the world of comedy—a world of moral relativism. Here we do not have a world of moral absolutes, of fundamental principles of conduct, of an underlying moral structure that cannot be tampered with.

The Author's Choice. We should be clear that the author *chooses* to handle his materials in this way. Wilde *might* have presented Mrs. E.'s original desertion of her husband as of moral significance (the immedi- [illegible]

and she has survived as a shrewd, resourceful, witty woman of the world. But she has not won the victory of real character—that is, of having got to the bottom of things. Wilde likewise makes Lady W.'s *experience*—relatively speaking, at least—only skin-deep, that is, comic. He might have had a real clash if there had been some vital, basic conflict between Lord and Lady W., or if Lady W. had actually loved Lord Darlington, in either case Lady W. would have run into the inescapable irreconcilability of two modes of life. She would have faced an actual crossroads. But there is no crossroads; Lady W. is merely in momentary danger of getting off on a sidetrack. It's all a mistake; not even a moral mistake, but a mere misunderstanding.

In tragedy, we may say, there is no easy way out, because the characters are coming to grips with what is permanently true. In tragedy, therefore, we expect to find symbols of permanent values. But Wilde is at pains to avoid such symbols. Society cannot embody the permanent, because Wilde

by his ridicule deprives it of moral authority (even though he may tacitly admit that conventions are useful). Mrs. Erlynne's career might symbolize the good, perhaps—but she distinctly repudiates her own career. Lady W. starts by defending "hard-and-fast" rules, but it is the whole business of the play to wean her away from those rules. Does not the very matter of the play, then, preclude the possibility of tragedy? Wilde refuses to be concerned with the inevitable, with what must be; rather, he wishes to show the manysidedness of what is. (In one sense, he plays certain variations upon a theme. Note, for instance, the different varieties of relationship between the sexes which he presents in the course of the play.) The next play to which we come, *Everyman*, takes its stand firmly on the universal validity of certain truths. But Wilde, we see, tends to deny the existence of such a character as Everyman. Thus he makes tragedy impossible; and he gives us at least one pattern for comedy.

3. THE "WELL-MADE" PLAY

Wilde's play belongs, in some respects, to a type called the "well-made" play, a reaction against the romantic drama of the early nineteenth century. Writers of such plays wished to deal realistically with current society; they often dealt with "problems" like divorce; they wished to avoid accidents and surprises and to have instead a careful, plausible mechanical connection among the various parts; to achieve a skillful, logical motivation, preparation of effects, and bringing about of denouements.

In the earlier discussions we have seen how Wilde manages some technical problems very well, others less so. Here we may note one or two "well-made" devices of his, for instance, the careful use of various concrete articles or stage properties as means of (1) bringing about certain actions or (2) conveying certain meanings. There are the roses (Acts I and IV), the bankbook (I), the letter (II), the bouquet (II), the photographs (IV). Most striking, of course, is the fan, which Wilde considers important enough to use in the title. As it is put to different uses in one Act after another, it becomes a kind of connecting link; but, more than that, it has a series of symbolic meanings. Like other such properties when well used, a concrete symbol of this sort both seizes the attention and stimulates the imagination.

Such materials, of course, can be used too obviously: in Act I Lady W. "throws" down the bankbook just as her husband enters; in Act II Mrs. E. "drops letter"—a means of intensifying suspense; Lady W. not only takes the fan along on an elopement but is very careless about what she does with it. All this will seem to us somewhat less than "well-made." Since it once seemed "realistic," we can perhaps conclude that "realism" is relative and therefore not a very trustworthy guarantee of literary excellence. In fact, the manipulation of external matters is never of primary importance; some playwrights are very little concerned with this sort of

thing. What is more important is sound sense of character and the values with which human beings must come to grips.

4. THE PROBLEM PLAY

This kind of play is also called the "problem play." In a sense, of course, almost any play involves a problem, but the term "problem play" is customarily used only with reference to plays treating a social problem—class distinctions, conventions, women's rights, etc. (for a fuller discussion see the Glossary).

Wilde's play is unusual in that he deals with a social problem in the witty style generally associated with the comedy of manners (see Glossary) rather than in the solemn manner that one often finds in a problem play. Does the witty manner produce an effect of triviality? Consider Lord D.'s definition of a cynic in Act III. Does Wilde ever use wit inappropriately, or is it possible, on the other hand, that he gains by using the witty style? What is the influence of wit on potentially melodramatic scenes or on love-making scenes or on trite scenes? On the total effect of the screen scene in Act III? What tone might Mrs. E.'s lines in Act IV have had if they had been written "straight"?

A problem play is always under a handicap in that it usually derives from a specific transitory situation, and it is difficult for the play to survive the situation. It may of course, deal with a recurrent problem, or deal with a problem in terms of some universal human issue. Something of that sort is what we find in the next play to which we come, *Everyman.* It deals with a "problem," but in it we shall find none of the shifting social conventions out of which Wilde's play springs.

OTHER QUESTIONS

1. Why did Wilde have Mr. Erlynne desert Mrs Erlynne? How would the play differ if they had got on and Mr. Erlynne were on the scene?

2. Aside from the change in his attitude toward her and the contrast between his and his wife's attitude toward her, what is ironic about Lord W.'s antagonistic attitude to Mrs E. late in the play?

3. Does a witty passage create of its own nature a kind of tension? Compare this tension with that produced by an unsolved situation.

4. Can you discern any sort of "technique" or pattern in the witty passages? Do the best lines occur in a series or do you find them separated? How does Wilde focus attention on his best lines? Note the function of questions in a witty passage. Are these ever too obvious?

5. If Wilde were going to sustain society against Mrs E., he would have to indicate that recognition of her would in some way be harmful to society. But instead he indicates that she cannot harm society. How? Assuming that the average reader will normally take the part of the group against the individual dubbed immoral, how does Wilde from the start prevent the reader's taking society's opinion of Mrs. E. very seriously?

6. Why is nothing seen of Lord D. after Act III?

7. What is the function of the Agatha-Hopper affair? Why are we shown so little of it directly?

8. What is shown by Lady B.'s change of attitude toward Australia?

9. How do you know at the start that Lady W. is wrong in her opinion of Lord W.'s relations with Mrs. E.?

10. Many of the speeches of Lord D., Cecil, and Dumby and the Duchess of Berwick are meant to evoke laughter from the reader. But is the laughter that the Duchess of B. gets the same as that evoked by the others? Analyze the difference.

11. Note the different attitudes of wives to husbands found throughout the play.

12. What is the relation of wit and emotion? Are they antithetical? What sort of effects would wit interfere with or prevent? Is the play a comedy because it contains wit?

13. What is the effect of Lady W.'s pun on *bond* and *bondage* in her last speech in Act II? Does it give an effect of frivolity?

PART TWO



SIMPLER TYPES

1. *Introduction*

In Part I we have considered, in general, the problems which all dramatists face, and we have examined in detail one full-length modern play to see how one dramatist answers the various questions which confront him. We have endeavored also to see what the dramatist is "saying" and how this theme is related to the structure and form of the play. We should therefore have some idea of how drama in general works.

In Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* we have seen a full-length play which combines, in a moderately complex way, elements of the comedy of wit, the problem play, and the "well-made" play. Our next step is to study three simpler dramatic forms in each of which a single element is dominant. In more advanced drama we are less likely to find plays in which the author has a single purpose so clearly evident as it is here and in which he goes so unmistakably to the point. So in Part II we ought to gain a fairly clearcut picture of certain types of dramatic procedure used when the author is intent upon one kind of stress rather than another. The objectives may be more or less commendable, and the procedures successful or unsuccessful; in either case we shall of course wish to know the reasons why.

In *Everyman* we find a play in which all the stress is upon the *idea* which the author wishes to develop. In that sense it may be called a problem play, and part of our business will be to see how it differs from *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Since some aspects of *Everyman* suggest the mode of tragedy, we shall also have a new kind of material to examine.

Plautus's *Menaechmi* is a comedy and therefore also subject to comparison with *Lady Windermere's Fan*. But it is a simpler kind of comedy, and Plautus is concerned with no problem. Hence the play will offer a quite different vantage point for the study of comedy

Lillo's *George Barnwell* is a kind of tragedy which also contains some suggestions of the problem play; hence it may be useful to see how it differs from *Everyman*. Indeed, it is very interestingly different in materials and point of view; and in what it fails to do it should be very illuminating.

2. *Everyman*

EVERYMAN is of unknown authorship and of uncertain date: it is generally thought to belong to the late fifteenth century. It is the best-known example of the "morality play," a definite historical type which has as its primary purpose the teaching of a lesson. Though there were many variations of the form, the characteristic plot was based on a conflict of the Virtues and the Vices for the Soul of man.

EVERYMAN *

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Everyman	Kindred	Beauty
God: Adonai	Goods	Knowledge
Death	Good-Deeds	Confession
Messenger	Strength	Angel
Fellowship	Discretion	Doctor
Cousin	Five-Wits	

* Spelling is generally modernized.

Here beginneth a treatise how the high father of Heaven sendeth death to summon every creature to come and give account of their lives in this world and is in manner of a moral play. [*Enter a messenger who speaks the Prologue.*]

Messenger: I pray you all give your audience,
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure[1] a moral play:
The *Summoning of Everyman* called it is,
That of our lives and ending shows
How transitory we be all day.
This matter is wondrous precious,
But the intent of it is more gracious,
And sweet to bear away.
The story saith:—Man, in the beginning,
Look well, and take good heed to the ending,
Be you never so gay;
Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
Which in the end causeth the soul to weep,
When the body lieth in clay.
Here shall you see how Fellowship and Jollity,
Both Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty,
Will fade from thee as flower in May.
For we shall hear, how our heaven king
Calleth Everyman to a general reckoning:
Give audience, and hear what he doth say. [*Exit.*]

God speaketh [*from above*]: I perceive here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly[2] sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;

[1] In form.

[2] Spiritual.

In worldly riches is all their mind.
They fear not my rightwiseness, the sharp rod;
My law that I shewed, when I for them died,
They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red;
I hanged between two, it cannot be denied;
To get them life I suffered to be dead;
I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was my head;
I could do no more than I did truly,
And now I see the people do clean forsake me:
They use the seven deadly sins damnable,
As pride, covetise, wrath, and lechery,
Now in the world be made commendable,
And thus they leave of angels the heavenly company;
Every man liveth so after his own pleasure,
And yet of their life they be nothing sure:
I see the more that I them forbear
The worse they be from year to year,
All that liveth appaireth[3] fast;
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of every man's person.
For, and[4] I leave the people thus alone
In their life and wicked tempests,
Verily they will become much worse than beasts,
For now one would by envy another up eat;
Charity they all do clean forget
I hoped well that every man
In my glory should make his mansion,
And thereto I had them all elect;
But now I see, like traitors deject,
They thank me not for the pleasure that I to them meant,
Nor yet for their being that I them have lent.
I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,
And few there be that asketh it heartily,
They be so cumbered with worldly riches,
That needs on them I must do justice,
On every man living without fear.
Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?
[*Enter Death.*]

Death: Almighty God, I am here at your will,
Your commandment to fulfill.

God: Go thou to Everyman,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning.
Without delay or any tarrying
[*God withdraws.*]

Death: Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
And cruelly outsearch both great and small,
Every man will I beset that liveth beastly
Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly.
He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart,
His sight to blind, and from heaven to depart,
Except that alms be his good friend,
In hell for to dwell, world without end.
Lo, yonder I see Everyman walking;
Full little he thinketh on my coming;
His mind is on fleshy lusts and his treasure,
And great pain it shall cause him to endure
Before the Lord, Heaven King.
Everyman, stand still; whither art thou going
Thus gayly? Hast thou thy Maker forgot? [*Death halts Everyman.*]

Everyman. Why askest thou?
Wouldst thou weet?[5]

Death. Yea, sir, I will show you;
In great haste I am sent to thee
From God, out of his majesty.

Everyman. What, sent to me?

[3] Decays [4] If.

[5] Know.

Death: Yea, certainly.
Though thou hast forgot him here,
He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere,
As, ere we depart, thou shalt know.
Everyman: What desireth God of me?
Death: That shall I show thee:
A reckoning he will needs have,
Without any longer respite.
Everyman: To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave;
This blind matter troubleth my wit.
Death: On thee thou must take a long journey:
Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring,
For turn again thou cannot by no way,
And look thou be sure of thy reckoning,
For before God thou shalt answer, and show
Thy many bad deeds and good but a few,
How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
Before the chief lord of paradise.
Have ado we were in that way,[6]
For, weet thou well, thou shalt make none attorney.
Everyman: Full unready I am such reckoning to give.
I know thee not; what messenger art thou?
Death: I am Death, that no man dreadeth.
For every man I 'rest, and no man spareth;
For it is God's commandment
That all to me should be obedient.
Everyman: O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind!
In thy power it lieth me to save;
Yet of my goods will I give thee, if thou wilt be kind,
Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have,
And defer this matter till another day.
Death: Everyman, it may not be by no way.
I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,
Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke, nor princes.
For, and I would receive gifts great,
All the world I might get;
But my custom is clean contrary.
I give thee no respite; come hence, and not tarry.
Everyman: Alas! shall I have no longer respite?
I may say, Death giveth no warning:
To think on thee, it maketh my heart sick,
For all unready is my book of reckoning.
But twelve year and I might have abiding,
My counting book I would make so clear,
That my reckoning I should not need to fear.
Wherefore, Death, I pray thee, for God's mercy,
Spare me till I be provided of remedy.
Death: Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray:
But haste thee lightly that thou wast gone this journey,
And prove thy friends, if thou can.
For, weet thou well, the tide abideth no man,
And in the world each living creature
For Adam's sin must die of nature.
Everyman: Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,
And my reckoning surely make,
Show me, for saint charity,
Should I not come again shortly?
Death: No, Everyman; and thou be once there,
Thou mayst never more come here,
Trust me verily.
Everyman: O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,
Have mercy on me in this most need!
Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?
Death: Yea, if any be so hardy,
That would go with thee and bear thee company.
Hie thee that thou were gone to God's magnificence,

[6] Get ready that we may be on that road.

reckoning to give before his pres-
ence.
at, weenest thou thy life is given
thee,
d thy worldly goods also?
Everyman: I had wend[1] so, verily.
Death: Nay, nay; it was but lent thee;
or as soon as thou art gone,
nother awhile shall have it, and then
go therefrom,
Even as thou hast done.
Everyman, thou art mad! Thou hast
thy wits five,
And here on earth will not amend thy
life!
For suddenly I do come.
Everyman: O wretched caitiff, whither
shall I flee,
That I might scape this endless sorrow?
Now, gentle Death, spare me till to-
morrow,
That I may amend me
With good advisement
Death: Nay, thereto I will not con-
sent,
Nor no man will I respite;
But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
Without any advisement
And now out of thy sight I will me hie,
See thou make thee ready shortly,
For thou mayst say this is the day
That no man living may scape away
[*Exit Death.*]
Everyman Alas! I may well weep
with sighs deep,
Now have I no manner of company
To help me in my journey, and me to
keep,
And also my writing is full unready
How shall I do now for to excuse me?
I would to God I had never be getel[2]
To my soul a full great profit it had
been,
For now I fear pains huge and great.
The time passeth; Lord, help, that all
wrought!
For though I mourn, it availeth nought
The day passeth, and is almost a-go,
I wot not well what for to do.

[1] Thought. [2] Been born

To whom were I best my complaint to
make?
What and I to Fellowship thereof spake,
And showed him of this sudden chance?
For in him is all mine affiance[a];
We have in the world so many a day
Been good friends in sport and play.
I see him yonder, certainly;
I trust that he will bear me company;
Therefore to him will I speak to ease
my sorrow. [*Enter Fellowship.*]
Well met, good Fellowship, and good
morrow!
Fellowship: Everyman, good morrow!
By this day,
Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?
If any thing be amiss, I pray thee me
say,
That I may help to remedy.
Everyman. Yea, good Fellowship, yea,
I am in great jeopardy
Fellowship My true friend, show to
me your mind,
I will not forsake thee, to my life's end,
In the way of good company
Everyman That was well spoken, and
lovingly
Fellowship Sir, I must needs know
your heaviness,
I have pity to see you in any distress.
If any have you wronged ye shall re-
venged be,
Though I on the ground be slain for thee,
Though that I know before that I
should die
Everyman Verily, Fellowship, gra-
mercy
Fellowship Tush! by thy thanks I set
not a straw
Show me your grief, and say no more
Everyman: If I my heart should to
you break,
And then you to turn your mind from
me,
And would not me comfort, when ye
hear me speak,
Then should I ten times sorrier be.
Fellowship Sir, I say as I will do in
deed

[a] Trust

Everyman: Then be you a good friend at need.
I have found you true here before.
Fellowship: And so ye shall evermore;
For, in faith, and thou go to Hell,
I will not forsake thee by the way.
Everyman: Ye speak like a good friend. I believe you well;
I shall deserve it, and I may.
Fellowship: I speak of no deserving, by this day.
For he that will say and nothing do
Is not worthy with good company to go;
Therefore show me the grief of your mind,
As to your friend most loving and kind.
Everyman: I shall show you how it is:
Commanded I am to go a journey,
A long way, hard and dangerous,
And give a straight count without delay
Before the high judge Adonai.
Wherefore I pray you, bear me company,
As ye have promised, in this journey.
Fellowship: That is matter indeed! Promise is duty,
But, and I should take such a voyage on me,
I know it well, it should be to my pain;
Also it makes me afeard, certain.
But let us take counsel here as well as we can,
For your words would fear a strong man.
Everyman: Why, ye said, if I had need,
Ye would me never forsake, quick nor dead,
Though it were to Hell, truly.
Fellowship: So I said, certainly.
But such pleasures be set aside, the sooth to say:
And also, if we took such a journey,
When should we come again?
Everyman: Nay, never again till the day of doom.
Fellowship: In faith, then will not I come there!
Who hath you these tidings brought?
Everyman: Indeed, Death was with me here.
Fellowship: Now, by God that all hath bought,
If Death were the messenger,
For no man that is living today
I will not go that loath [10] journey—
Not for the father that begat me!
Everyman: Ye promised otherwise, pardie.[11]
Fellowship: I wot well I say so truly;
And yet if thou wilt eat, and drink, and make good cheer,
Or haunt to women the lusty company,
I would not forsake you, while the day is clear,
Trust me verily!
Everyman: Yea, thereto ye would be ready;
To go to mirth, solace, and play,
Your mind will sooner apply,
Than to bear me company in my long journey.
Fellowship: Now, in good faith, I will not that way.
But and thou will murder, or any man kill,
In that I will help thee with a good will!
Everyman: O, that is a simple advice indeed!
Gentle fellow, help me in my necessity;
We have loved long, and now I need;
And now, gentle Fellowship, remember me.
Fellowship: Whether ye have loved me or no,
By Saint John, I will not with thee go.
Everyman: Yet I pray thee, take the labor, and do so much for me
To bring me forward, for saint charity,
And comfort me till I come without the town.
Fellowship: Nay, and thou would give me a new gown,
I will not a foot with thee go;
But and thou had tarried I would not have left thee so.
And as now, God speed thee in thy journey,
For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.

[10] Loathsome. [11] Certainly.

Everyman: Whither away, Fellowship? will thou forsake me?
Fellowship: Yea, by my fay! to God I betake [11] thee!
Everyman: Farewell, good Fellowship; for this my heart is sore;
Adieu forever, I shall see thee no more.
Fellowship: In faith, Everyman, farewell now at the end;
For you I will remember that parting is mourning. [*Exit Fellowship.*]
Everyman: Alack! shall we thus depart indeed?
Ah, Lady, help, without any more comfort,
Lo, Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need.
For help in this world whither shall I resort?
Fellowship herebefore with me would merry make,
And now little sorrow for me doth he take.
It is said, in prosperity men friends may find,
Which in adversity be full unkind.
Now whither for succor shall I flee,
Sith [12] that Fellowship hath forsaken me?
To my kinsmen I will truly,
Praying them to help me in my necessity;
I believe that they will do so,
For kind [13] will creep where it may not go.[14]
I will go say,[15] for yonder I see them go.
Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen? [*Enter Kindred and Cousin.*]
Kindred: Here be we now at your commandment.
Cousin, I pray you show us your intent
In any wise, and not spare.
Cousin: Yea, Everyman, and to us declare
If ye be disposed to go any whither,
For wit you well, we will live and die together.
Kindred: In wealth and woe we will with you hold,
For over his kin a man may be bold.
Everyman: Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind;
Now shall I show you the grief of my mind.
I was commanded by a messenger,
That is an high king's chief officer;
He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain,
And I know well I shall never come again;
Also I must give a reckoning straight,
For I have a great enemy, that hath me in wait,[17]
Which intendeth me for to hinder.
Kindred: What account is that which ye must render?
That would I know.
Everyman: Of all my works I must show
How I have lived and my days spent;
Also of ill deeds, that I have used
In my time, sith life was me lent,
And of all virtues that I have refused.
Therefore I pray you go thither with me,
To help to make mine account, for saint charity.
Cousin: What, to go thither? Is that the matter?
Nay, Everyman, I had liefer fast bread and water
All this five year and more.
Everyman: Alas, that ever I was born!
For now shall I never be merry
If that you forsake me.
Kindred: Ah, sir, what, ye be a merry man!
Take good heart to you, and make n[o] moan.
But one thing I warn you, by Sai[nt] Anne,
As for me, ye shall go alone.
Everyman: My Cousin, will you [not] with me go?
Cousin: No, by our Lady! I have [the] cramp in my toe.
Trust not to me, for, so God me s[peed],
I will deceive you in your most n[eed].

[11] Commend.
[12] Since
[13] Kinship
[14] Walk.
[15] Try.
[17] Has me under observation

Kindred: It availeth not us to tice.[18]
Ye shall have my maid with all my heart;
She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,[19]
And to dance, and abroad to start:
I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
If that you and she may agree.
Everyman: Now show me the very effect of your mind,
Will you go with me, or abide behind?
Kindred: Abide behind? yea, that will I and I *may*!
Therefore farewell till another day.
[*Exit Kindred.*]
Everyman: How should I be merry or glad?
For fair promises men to me make,
But when I have most need, they me forsake.
I am deceived; that maketh me sad.
Cousin: Cousin Everyman, farewell now,
For verily I will not go with you.
Also of mine own an unready reckoning
I have to account; therefore I make tarrying.
Now, God keep thee, for now I go.
[*Exit Cousin.*]
Everyman: Ah, Jesus, is all come hereto?
Lo, fair words maketh fools bain [20];
They promise and nothing will do certain.
My kinsmen promised me faithfully
For to abide with me steadfastly,
And now fast away do they flee:
Even so Fellowship promised me.
What friend were best me of to provide?
I lose my time here longer to abide.
Yet in my mind a thing there is;—
All my life I have loved riches;
If that my Goods now help me might,
He would make my heart full light.
I will speak to him in this distress.—
Where art thou, my Goods and Riches?

[18] To coax us. [19] Wanton. [20] Obedient.

Goods: [*Within.*] Who calleth me? Everyman? what hast thou haste?
I lie here in corners, trussed and piled so high,
And in chests I am locked so fast,
Also sacked in bags, thou mayst see with thine eye,
I cannot stir; in packs low I lie.
What would ye have, lightly me say.
Everyman: Come hither, Goods, in all the haste thou may,
For of counsel I must desire thee.
[*Enter Goods.*]
Goods: Sir, and ye in the world have sorrow or adversity,
That can I help you to remedy shortly.
Everyman: It is another disease that grieveth me;
In this world it is not, I tell thee so.
I am sent for another way to go,
To give a straight account general
Before the highest Jupiter of all
And all my life I have had joy and pleasure in thee,
Therefore I pray thee go with me;
For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty
My reckoning help to clean and purify;
For it is said ever among,
That money maketh all right that is wrong.
Goods: Nay, Everyman, I sing another song,
I follow no man in such voyages;
For and I went with thee
Thou shouldst fare much the worse for me.
For because on me thou didst set thy mind,
Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,
That thine account thou cannot make truly;
And that hast thou for the love of me.
Everyman: That would grieve me full sore,
When I should come to that fearful answer.
Up, let us go thither together.
Goods: Nay, not so, I am too brittle, I may not endure;

Everyman: Therefore I come to you, my moan to make;
I pray you that ye will go with me.
Good-Deeds: I would full fain, but I cannot stand, verily.
Everyman: Why, is there anything on you fall?
Good-Deeds: Yea, sir, I may thank you of all,[23]
If ye had perfectly cheered me,
Your book of count full ready now had been.
Look, the books of your works and deeds eke;
Ah, see how they lie under the feet,
To your soul's heaviness.
Everyman: Our Lord Jesus, help me!
For one letter here I cannot see.
Good-Deeds: There is a blind reckoning in time of distress!
Everyman: Good-Deeds, I pray you, help me in this need,
Or else I am forever damned indeed.
Therefore help me to make reckoning
Before the redeemer of all thing,
That king is, and was, and ever shall.
Good-Deeds: Everyman, I am sorry of your fall,
And fain would I help you, and I were able.
Everyman: Good-Deeds, your counsel I pray you give me.
Good-Deeds: That shall I do verily;
Though that on my feet I may not go,
I have a sister, that shall with you also,
Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide,
To help you to make that dreadful reckoning. [*Enter Knowledge.*]
Knowledge: Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.
Everyman: In good condition I am now in every thing,
And am wholly content with this good thing;
Thanked be God my Creator.
Good-Deeds: And when she hath brought thee there,
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,
Then go thou with thy reckoning and thy Good-Deeds together,
For to make thee joyful at heart
Before the blessed Trinity.
Everyman: My Good-Deeds, gramercy;
I am well content, certainly,
With your words sweet.
Knowledge: Now go we together lovingly,
To Confession, that cleansing river.
Everyman: For joy I weep; I would we were there.
But, I pray you, give me cognition
Where dwelleth that holy man, Confession.
Knowledge: In the house of salvation:
We shall find him in that place,
That shall us comfort by God's grace.
[*Enter Confession.*]
Lo, this is Confession; kneel down and ask mercy,
For he is in good conceit with God Almighty.
Everyman: [*kneeling.*] O glorious fountain that all uncleanness doth clarify,
Wash from me the spots of vice unclean,
That on me no sin may be seen.
I come with Knowledge for my redemption,
Redempt with hearty and full contrition;
For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
And great accounts before God to make.
Now, I pray you, Shrift, mother of salvation,
Help my good deeds for my piteous exclamation. [*He rises.*]
Confession: I know your sorrow well, Everyman;
Because with Knowledge ye come to me,
I will you comfort as well as I can,
And a precious jewel I will give thee,
Called penance, voider of adversity;
Therewith shall your body chastised be,
With abstinence and perseverance in God's service:
[*Gives Everyman a scourge.*]

[23] For everything.

Here shall you receive that scourge of me,
Which is penance strong, that ye must endure,
To remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee
With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently;
So must thou, ere thou scape that painful pilgrimage;
Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
And by that time Good-Deeds will be with thee.
But in any wise, be sure of mercy,
For your time draweth fast; and ye will saved be,
[illegible]
[illegible]
The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

Everyman: Thanked be God for his gracious work,
For now I will my penance begin;
This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
Though the knots be painful and hard within.

Knowledge: Everyman, look your penance that ye fulfill,
What pain that ever it to you be,
And Knowledge shall give you counsel at will,
How your account ye shall make clearly.

[*Everyman kneels in prayer.*]

Everyman: O eternal God, O heavenly figure,
[illegible]
Which Adam forfeited by his disobedience,
O blessed Godhead, elect and high divine,
Forgive my grievous offence;
Here I cry thee mercy in this presence.
O ghostly treasure, O ransomer and redeemer,
Of all the world hope and conductor,
Mirror of joy, founder of mercy,
Which illumineth heaven and earth thereby,
Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be!
Receive my prayers; unworthy in this heavy life
Though I be, a sinner most abominable,
Yet let my name be written in Moses' table.
O Mary, pray to the Maker of all thing,
Me for to help at my ending,
And save me from the power of my enemy,
For Death assaileth me strongly;
And, Lady, that I may by means of thy prayer
Of your Son's glory to be partner,
By the means of his passion I it crave,
I beseech you, help my soul to save!

[*He rises.*]

Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance,
My flesh therewith shall give acquaintance.
I will now begin, if God give me grace.

Knowledge: Everyman, God give you time and space:
Thus I bequeath you in the hands of our Saviour
Now may you make your reckoning sure.

Everyman: In the name of the Holy Trinity,
My body sore punished shall be:

[*He begins to scourge himself.*]

Take this, body, for the sin of the flesh;
Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh,
And in the way of damnation thou did me bring,
Therefore suffer now strokes of punishing.
Now of penance I will wade the water clear,
To save me from purgatory, that sharp fire.

[*Good-Deeds rises from the floor.*]

Good-Deeds: I thank God, now I can walk and go,
And am delivered of my sickness and woe.
Therefore with Everyman I will go, and not spare;

His good works I will help him to declare.

Knowledge: Now, Everyman, be merry and glad;
Your Good-Deeds cometh now, ye may not be sad;
Now is your Good-Deeds whole and sound,
Going upright upon the ground.

Everyman: My heart is light, and shall be evermore;
Now will I smite faster than I did before.

Good-Deeds: Everyman, pilgrim, my special friend,
Blessed be thou without end;
For thee is prepared the eternal glory.
Ye have me made whole and sound,
Therefore I will bide by thee in every stound.[29]

Everyman: Welcome, my Good-Deeds! Now I hear thy voice,
I weep for sweetness of love.

Knowledge: Be no more sad, but ever rejoice;
God seeth thy living in his throne above.
Put on this garment to thy behove,[30]
Which is wet with your tears,
Or else before God you may it miss,
When ye to your journey's end come shall.

Everyman: Gentle Knowledge, what do you it call?

Knowledge: It is a garment of sorrow,
From pain it will you borrow[31];
Contrition it is,
That getteth forgiveness;
It pleaseth God passing well.

Good-Deeds: Everyman, will you wear it for your heal?

[*Everyman puts on the robe of contrition.*]

Everyman: Now blessed be Jesu, Mary's Son,
For now have I on true contrition.
And let us go now without tarrying.
Good-Deeds, have we clear our reckoning?

Good-Deeds: Yea, indeed I have them here.

Everyman: Then I trust we need not fear.
Now, friends, let us not part in twain.

Knowledge: Nay, Everyman, that will we not, certain.

Good-Deeds: Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.

Everyman: Who should they be?

Good-Deeds: Discretion and Strength they hight,[32]
And thy Beauty may not abide behind.

Knowledge: Also ye must call to mind
Your Five-Wits as for your counsellors.

Good-Deeds: You must have them ready at all hours.

Everyman: How shall I get them hither?

Knowledge: You must call them all together,
And they will hear you incontinent.

Everyman: My friends, come hither and be present,
Discretion, Strength, my Five-Wits, and Beauty.

[*Enter Discretion, Strength, Five-Wits, and Beauty.*]

Beauty: Here at your will we be all ready.
What will ye that we should do?

Good-Deeds: That ye would with Everyman go,
And help him in his pilgrimage.
Advise you, will ye with him or not in that voyage?

Strength: We will bring him all thither
To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.

Discretion: So will we go with him all together.

Everyman: Almighty God, loved might thou be,
I give thee laud that I have hither brought
Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and Five-Wits; lack I nought;
And my Good-Deeds, with Knowledge clear,

[29] Moment. [30] Benefit. [31] Ransom.

[32] Are called.

ll be in my company at my will here;
desire no more to my business.
Strength: And I, Strength, will by
you stand in distress,
Though thou would in battle fight on
the ground.
Five-Wits: And though it were
through the world round,
We will not depart for sweet nor sour.
Beauty: No more will I unto death's
hour,
Whatsoever thereof befall.
Discretion: Everyman, advise you first
of all,
Go with a good advisement and delibera-
tion.
We all give you virtuous monition
That all shall be well.
Everyman: My friends, hearken what
I will tell:
I pray God reward you in his heavenly
sphere.
Now hearken, all that be here,
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present.
In alms half my goods I will give with
my hands twain
In the way of charity, with good intent,
And the other half still shall remain
In quethe [a] to be returned there it
ought to be.
This I do in despite of the fiend of hell
To go quite out of his peril
Ever after and this day.
Knowledge: Everyman, hearken what
I say;
Go to priesthood, I you advise,
And receive of him in any wise
The holy sacrament and ointment to-
gether;
Then shortly see ye turn again hither,
We will all abide you here
Five-Wits: Yea, Everyman, hie you
that ye ready were
There is no emperor, king, duke, nor
baron,
That of God hath commission,
As hath the least priest in the world
being;

For of the blessed sacraments pure and
benign
He beareth the keys, and thereof hath
the cure
For man's redemption, it is ever sure,
Which God for our soul's medicine
Gave us out of his heart with great pain.
Here in this transitory life, for thee and
me .
The blessed sacraments seven there be:
Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood
good,
And the sacrament of God's precious
flesh and blood,
Marriage, the holy extreme unction,
and penance,
These seven be good to have in re-
membrance,
Gracious sacraments of high divinity.
Everyman Fain would I receive that
holy body,
And meekly to my ghostly [a] father I
will go. [*Exit Everyman.*]
Five-Wits Everyman, that is the best
that ye can do
God will you to salvation bring,
For priesthood exceedeth all other thing;
To us Holy Scripture they do teach,
And converteth man from sin, heaven
to reach
God hath to them more power given,
Than to any angel that is in heaven;
With five words he may consecrate
God's body in flesh and blood to make,
And handleth his maker between his
hands.
The priest bindeth and unbindeth al
bands,
Both in earth and in heaven
Thou ministers all the sacraments seve
Though we kiss thy feet thou w
worthy,
Thou art surgeon that cureth sin dea
No remedy we find under God
But all only priesthood
Everyman, God gave priests that dig
And setteth them in his stead amo
to be;
Thus be they above angels in deg

[a] Spiritual

[a] Request.

Knowledge: If priests be good it is so surely;
But when Jesus hanged on the cross with great smart,
There he gave, out of his blessed heart,
The same sacrament in great torment;
He sold them not to us, that Lord Omnipotent.
Therefore Saint Peter the apostle doth say
That Jesus' curse hath all they
Which God their Saviour do buy or sell,
Or they for any money do take or tell.[35]
Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad;
Their children sitteth by other men's fires, I have heard,
And some haunteth women's company,
With unclean life, as lusts of lechery;
These be with sin made blind.
Five-Wits: I trust to God no such may we find;
Therefore let us priesthood honor,
And follow their doctrine for our souls' succor;
We be their sheep, and they shepherds be
By whom we all be kept in surety.
Peace, for yonder I see Everyman come,
Which hath made true satisfaction.
[*Re-enter Everyman.*]
Good-Deeds: Methink it is he indeed.
Everyman: Now Jesu be our alder speed.[36]
I have received the sacrament for my redemption,
And then mine extreme unction:
Blessed be all they that counselled me to take it!
And now, friends, let us go without longer respite;
I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
Now set each of you on this rod [37] your hand,
And shortly follow me:
I go before, there I would be; God be our guide.
Strength: Everyman, we will not from you go,
Till ye have gone this voyage long.
Discretion: I, Discretion, will bide by you also.
Knowledge: And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,[38]
I will never part you from.
Everyman, I will be as sure by thee
As ever I did by Judas Maccabee.
[*They walk together to the grave.*]
Everyman: Alas, I am so faint I may not stand,
My limbs under me do fold.
Friends, let us not turn again to this land,
Not for all the world's gold,
For into this cave must I creep,
And turn to earth and there to sleep.
Beauty: What, into this grave? alas!
Everyman: Yea, there shall ye consume more and less.
Beauty: And what, should I smother here?
Everyman: Yea, by my faith, and nevermore appear.
In this world live no more we shall,
But in heaven before the highest Lord of all.
Beauty: I cross out all this! Adieu, by Saint John!
I take my cap in my lap and am gone.
Everyman: What, Beauty, whither will ye?
Beauty: Peace, I am deaf; I look not behind me,
Not and thou wouldst give me all the gold in thy chest. [*Exit Beauty.*]
Everyman: Alas, whereto may I trust?
Beauty goeth fast away from me,
She promised with me to live and die.
Strength: Everyman, I will thee also forsake and deny;
Thy game liketh me not at all.
Everyman: Why, then ye will forsake me all!
Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.
Strength: Nay, sir, by the rood of grace,
I will hie me from thee fast,
Though thou weep till thy heart do brast.[39]

[35] Count. [36] The help of all of us. [37] Cross.

[38] Hard. [39] Burst.

Everyman: Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.
Strength: Yea, I have you far enough conveyed;
Ye be old enough, I understand,
Your pilgrimage to take on hand.
I repent me that I hither came.
Everyman: Strength, you do to displease I am to blame;
Will you break promise that is debt?
Strength: In faith, as for that I care not;
Thou art but a fool to complain,
You spend your speech and waste your brain;
Go, thrust thee into the ground! [*Exit Strength.*]
Everyman: I had wend surer I should you have found.
But I see well, that trusteth in his Strength,
She him deceiveth at the length.
Both Strength and Beauty forsaketh me,
Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.
Discretion: Everyman, I will after Strength be gone,
As for me I will leave you alone.
Everyman: Why, Discretion, will ye forsake me?
Discretion: Yea, in faith, I will go from thee,
For when Strength goeth before
I follow after evermore.
Everyman: Yet, I pray thee, for love of the Trinity,
Look in my grave once piteously
Discretion: Nay, so nigh will I not come
Now farewell, fellows, every one! [*Exit Discretion.*]
Everyman: O, all things faileth, save God alone,
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion,
For when Death bloweth his blast,
They all run from me full fast
Five-Wits: Everyman, my leave now of thee I take;
I will follow the other, for here I thee
Everyman: Alas! then may I wail and weep,
For I took you for my best friend.
Five-Wits: I will no longer thee keep;
Now farewell, and here an end. [*Exit Five-Wits.*]
Everyman: O Jesu, help! all hath forsaken me!
Good-Deeds: Nay, Everyman, I will bide with thee,
I will not forsake thee indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.
Everyman: Gramercy, Good-Deeds, now may I true friends see;
They have forsaken me every one;
I loved them better than my Good-Deeds alone.
Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?
Knowledge: Yea, Everyman, when ye to death shall go;
But not yet for no manner of danger.
Everyman: Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart.
Knowledge: Nay, yet I will not from hence depart,
Till I see where ye shall be come.
Everyman: Methink, alas, that I must be gone,
To make my reckoning and my debts pay,
For I see my time is nigh spent away.
Take example, all ye that this do hea
or see,
How they that I love best do forsak
me,
Except my Good-Deeds that bide
truly
Good-Deeds: All earthly things is l
vanity
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion,
man forsake,
Foolish friends and kinsmen that
spake,
All fleeth save Good-Deeds, and
am I.
Everyman: Have mercy on m
most mighty,
And stand by me, thou Moth
Maid, holy Mary
Good-Deeds: Fear not, I will s
thee.

Everyman: Here I cry God mercy.
Good-Deeds: Short our end, and minish our pain;
Let us go and never come again.
Everyman: Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend;
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost!
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me from the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host
That shall be saved at the day of doom.
In manus tuas[40]—of might's most
Forever—*commendo spiritum meum.*[41]
[*Everyman and Good-Deeds descend into the grave.*]
Knowledge: Now hath he suffered that we all shall endure;
The Good-Deeds shall make all sure.
Now hath he made ending;
Methinketh that I hear angels sing
And make great joy and melody,
Where Everyman's soul received shall be.
Angel: [*Within.*] Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesu;
Here above thou shalt go,
Because of thy singular virtue.
Now thy soul is taken thy body from,
Thy reckoning is crystal-clear.
Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere,
Unto the which all ye shall come
That liveth well before the day of doom.
[*Exit Knowledge. Enter Doctor to speak the Epilogue.*]

[40] Into thy hands. [41] I commend my soul.

Doctor: This moral men may have in mind;
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the end,
And remember Beauty, Five-Wits, Strength, and Discretion,
They all at the last do Everyman forsake,
Save his Good-Deeds, there doth he take.
But beware, and they be small
Before God, he hath no help at all.
None excuse may be there for Everyman:
Alas, how shall he do then?
For after death amends may no man make,
For then mercy and pity do him forsake.
If his reckoning be not clear when he doth come,
God will say—*ite maledicti in ignem aeternum.*[42]
And he that hath his account whole and sound,
High in heaven he shall be crowned;
Unto which place God bring us all thither,
That we may live body and soul together.
Thereto help the Trinity!
Amen, say ye, for saint charity.
Thus endeth this moral play of Everyman.

[42] Go, ye accursed, into eternal fire.

NOTES ON *EVERYMAN*

I. THE NATURE OF PARABLE

Everyman may be regarded as a dramatized parable, and it therefore introduces the problems inherent in the parable form. A parable may be said to present some rather simple generalization by means of a concrete example: it is a story which makes a point. It is primarily concerned with *theme* or *idea*. For instance, if we turn to the New Testament, we find the story of the foolish man who built his house on the sand and the wise man

who built his upon the rock. The storm comes, the foundations of the first house are swept away, and the whole fabric crumbles; but the house built upon the rock survives the storm.

Each feature of the story has a simple moral meaning. The house clearly is not a structure of wood or stone or brick, but a moral edifice. The physical storm symbolizes the doubts and difficulties of life. The sandy foundation represents frivolous or false beliefs, whereas the rock is eternal truth.

It would be possible, of course, to express the point of the parable still more simply by dropping the symbolism altogether and stating the implied generalization abstractly: that is, the man who lives in accordance with truth can endure the difficulties of life without suffering the collapse of the man who foolishly ignores the truth.

But the parable form of statement has distinct advantages: by making use of a concrete story it renders the point more vividly and emphatically. The reader's feelings and imagination are engaged as well as his mind—a matter that is important in two ways. For one thing, it may be useful in merely understanding the point; this is especially true of untrained or unsophisticated minds, which are naturally more accessible to emotional appeal than to abstract logical statements and therefore find the parable an easily grasped kind of expression. The statement, "John Doe's life was lived in accordance with false premises," may seem "dry" because, even though it seems to concern a specific case, it is abstract in form. But the concrete picture of the house built upon the sand is emotionally stirring and is immediate in its impact. We are prepared for an ironical mockery of such expensive folly, and we begin to feel some apprehension as we think of the weak foundation. But it should by now be clear that the parable is doing more than merely making a point understandable: in stimulating our emotions and imaginations, it is giving us a fuller and more complete experience than would the bare statement of fact. It is no longer a device of exposition for relatively untutored minds, but as it effectively engages our interest and our sympathies, it acts on the same level as works of literary art.

The Problem of the Parable Writer: the Relationship of Theme and Form. The parable writer, in other words, finds himself to some extent working in two fields at the same time. In one, he is writing a sermon, the aim of which is [illegible] to give that id[illegible] appeal to our [illegible] and complicate the original forthright idea. Through our imaginations, which are necessarily brought into play by the story form, we naturally begin to see new meanings and implications. Thus, the theme of the sermon is expanded. For instance, the Biblical parable of the two houses might suggest to us such questions as the following: Was the man arrogantly foolish? Was he led into his folly by false appearance? Did he become criminally careless because he was preoccupied with other things? How will he feel when the house collapses—terrified, remorseful, or eager to blame

someone else? And what of the innocent occupants of the house? What attitude are we to take toward them?

Now, as it happens, the author of this parable has taken steps to prevent such questions from becoming too prominent and thus interfering with the singleness of this theme. He simply says, "The man was foolish"; we are meant to accept this as adequate motivation of his action. Nor does the author say anything about the other occupants or give any real hints to stimulate our inquiring into the man's feelings after the fall of his house. In other words, the author has "protected" his thesis, so to speak; he has stuck quite close to the sermon form; he has not yielded very much to the demands of art, though he has used some of the devices of art.

When, however, the parable writer does use literary methods—action and character—to give his theme conviction and dramatic force, he does inevitably begin to surrender some of the simplicity of his theme. For the questions proposed by our imagination suggest *variations of the theme;* actually, we are tending to break down the abstract *generalization* into *concrete individual experiences.* The sermon gives us the generalization; the drama presents an experience. The particular circumstances of the experience begin to modify and qualify the simple, abstract statement. In conclusion, then, we come to this double principle, which is very important in dealing with the complex "parables" which drama involves: in proportion as we put an idea—any idea—as simply, generally, and abstractly as possible, we militate against dramatic effectiveness; and conversely, in proportion as we present a theme concretely and vividly, we tend, as a necessary consequence, to suggest a more complex interpretation of events than any simple, abstract statement will convey.

How We Become Aware of the "Meaning." Most important of all, we tend, in the concrete, dramatic presentation of the theme, to shift from the author's own unequivocal "meaning" as it may be stated by the author himself in his role as scientist, historian, or moralist to the total "meaning" of the events as presented to the audience or to the reader. To state the matter in slightly different terms: when we fictionalize or dramatize a generalization about life, the meaning tends to shift from the "say-so" of the author as an expert or authority to the meaning of the fictional or dramatic structure. The author speaks not directly but indirectly; he does not try to convince us by his logic or his authority, but offers us a group of events whose meaning we apprehend imaginatively.

Now the latter method does not mean that the author speaks any the less intelligibly; if he is a good artist, the novelist or dramatist or poet can successfully convey to us his interpretation. He may fail—just as the writer who speaks to us directly in his own person may fail by use of mistaken facts, bad logic, or muddled organization. But, with his more complex task, the artist has possibilities of full success. He selects and arranges the actions and the other dramatic materials in which we find a certain significance; when the arrangement and selection are done with sufficient skill and insight, what we see in them will presumably be very

close to what he sees in them (we have already seen how the structure of *Lady Windermere's Fan* leads us definitely toward certain conclusions about Wilde's "meaning"). But at the same time that we are interpreting the structure of actions that constitute the play, we are also, as it were, participating in them and emotionally responding to them; the fact that we enter imaginatively into the story or play accounts for its superior immediacy and power.

2. THEME AND DRAMA IN *Everyman*

Although in the study of *Lady Windermere's Fan* we were finally able to come to some reasonably definite conclusions about "meaning," the theme was never in the foreground. What we were primarily conscious of was the conflict and interplay of a set of sharply characterized individuals. But in *Everyman* the situation is different: the theme is clearly before us from the start, and the characters and action are, in a sense, in a secondary position. Hence our critical problem here is a different one.

We do not have to spend much time showing how the events of the play conform to the theme, for it is clear that the author has started out with the Christian account of life and adapted to it the particular set of circumstances that constitute the play. Rarely do we forget that he is expounding to us certain basic Christian values. The beginning and ending of the play and God's speech (ll. 22 ff.) present the theme almost to the exclusion of dramatic interest. The part of the play lying roughly between ll. 550 and 650 is largely a straightforward presentation, without conflict, of certain steps that the human being must go through on the way to salvation. Do you find other such relatively undramatic passages?

But the author has not chosen to write a sermon: he has written a dramatized parable. And the consequences of his use of the dramatic form are forcefully apparent. Here, then, is where our critical problem really lies: we want to see how much of an artist he was, that is, to what extent he made his drama a self-consistent presentation of a concrete experience and allowed his thesis to become subordinate to the more complex view of life entailed in the tracing of individual experiences.

Characterization. In a sense this play may be called an allegory, that is, each of the characters and events is definitely related to a system of abstract meanings The names of the characters, of course, show their origin in abstractions—Knowledge, Discretion, Good Deeds, and so on. But they are not merely abstractions dressed up and walking around on the stage; some of them, at least, are three-dimensional beings that attain a degree of personality.

Death, for example, as far as the allegory is concerned, is merely what happens to all mortals, loss of life, which is the blotting out of the senses and the corruption of the body. Yet in the play, Death is presented as a person whose duty it is to summon Everyman before his Maker; but one notices that the author has done more than merely to dress Death up like a

human being. The author has given him something of a personality as well. Death has the brisk, businesslike air of a deputy sheriff. He even appears to get a certain relish out of the stammering surprise which his descent provokes in his hitherto unsuspecting victim. Yet, on the other hand, his attitude is definitely not malicious. After all, he has no personal animus against his victim. To serve the summons on Everyman is simply his duty—part of the day's work.

If the student is inclined to feel that Death has been credited here with more personality than he actually achieves, it will surely be easy enough to show that some of the other characters do become personalities. Fellowship, the abstract quality, is represented by a typical goodfellow, who approaches his friend to cheer him up, who swears not to forsake him "to my life's end," but who adds cautiously "In the way of good company," and who finally leaves the friend in the lurch when he finds that really serious matters are afoot.

In the same way, Kindred—supported by Cousin—transcends the mere abstraction to become a typical kinsman, genuinely concerned about Everyman's melancholy, full of fatuous comment, willing to help him out—up to a point—but flatly refusing Everyman's great request.

The allegory is working itself out as the play develops: the play is saying that friends and even kinsmen cannot die for one. But the play makes its general point by attempting to give the illusion of life—the interplay of real people and concrete events.

Structure. Aside, then, from attempting to develop some of his characters as characters, the author goes a step further: he presents his actions in a more complex form than would be necessary if he were only making a point about Christian values. He has several climaxes, with resultant changes in tension and mood; he makes rather skillful use of irony; he uses different means of suspense. In other words, he is trying in every way he can to make us become emotionally concerned; he wants his story to be effective as a story—his plot to work as plot.

For the sake of the theme, all the author must do is show Everyman embracing Christian values and thus gaining everlasting life. But the author is not content with so simple a pattern: he wishes to present also Everyman's devotion to false values, and later his failure to distinguish, in the realm of sound values, between those which are only of earthly significance and those which relate directly to eternal salvation. Now these experiences have to come in a certain order, and as we observe what that order is, we really discover the structure of the play.

Although *Everyman* has no internal divisions such as acts or scenes, it is clearly divided into four parts which have a definite relationship to each other. In Part I we see Everyman in conflict with death, and losing the battle (to l. 183). In Part II Everyman unsuccessfully tries to find a companion for his journey (to l. 462). In Part III he is more successful in his search for companions, and the mood changes to one of joy and exaltation (to l. 770). In Part IV we have another turnabout: Everyman has a second

major disappointment, and he finally meets death completely sobered and matured by his experiences. The author who conceived this fairly elaborate dramatic progression was doing much more than merely saying "Be good and you'll be happy."

Part I. Man's hearing that he must die would not on the face of it appear to have many dramatic possibilities. But the author does make it dramatic by showing Everyman trying to fight off Death as a concrete, personal enemy. Although the conclusion of the conflict is known in advance, the author maintains tension and interest with his vivid portrait of Everyman dashing quickly from one to another of the expedients by means of which human beings always greet or try to evade the unpleasant: incredulousness, the desire for delay, efforts to bribe, desire to do other things first, the naive hope that maybe it won't be so bad after all ("Should I not come again shortly?"), the hope for company, the final direct plea for grace. The author's acute psychological analysis of Everyman is much more than he needs to provide in order to develop his theme. But he wants to make his character alive.

Part II. In Part I we saw Everyman reduced from the brisk self-satisfaction of the undisturbed human being to the near-despair of one who must face death; now we see him experiencing several momentary recoveries of good spirits and then plunging into still deeper despair. In terms of action, Part II is connected with Part I by Everyman's acting on his expressed desire to find companionship Now what the author might do is merely to run Everyman through a series of similar experiences, each of which has the same disappointing ending. But, actually, one should notice how much variety he has achieved in this scene, which might be repetitious and hence monotonous. First, he has Everyman take the most natural step for a human being—seek human companionship, that of friends and relatives. Then Everyman with his plea shifts to a wholly different kind of character, Goods. This gives us, on a superficial level, contrast, and, on a more profound level, a sense of deep irony. while Everyman thinks he is finding a more durable companion, we can see him making an even less [illegible]

[illegible]

half so long; and that with Goods, where the theme receives a new twist, is longer again. The Fellowship scene is almost a playlet in itself, with the effect resting on irony: Everyman and Fellowship reach an enthusiastic height of good feeling based on the latter's helpfulness and the former's gratitude, and then comes the crash into reality. In the scene with Cousin and Kindred the author cannot use the same pattern of build-up and let-down; so here the refusal comes quite early (Everyman, partly disillusioned, is no longer so ambiguous about the journey he has to take). The author adds to the sense of freshness by the frivolity of Cousin's excuse: "I have the cramp in my toe"—a skillful picture of the ludicrously inadequate

excuses which human beings give to justify their failures. Note also Kindred's line: "Ye shall have my maid . . ." Why is this dramatically effective? Compare, on the other hand, the excuse which Goods gives: does it merely repeat the scheme used in Cousin's excuse? Notice Goods's speech in ll. 401–402: what equivocation or "double talk" has the author woven into the words of the promise? Is this appropriate? What devices does the author use to make Goods a "realistic" character?

Once again, it is clear that the demands of the mere theme do not account for all the careful technical elaboration. With a good sense of drama, the author has gone on to present a full and vivid set of experiences. As a result, when we come to the end of Part II we do not feel that we are only being lectured, but we can genuinely grasp the depression of Everyman, who is a plausible human being.

Part III. Again the central element in Everyman's new experience is irony: by the author's use of irony we can see that he is avoiding the run-of-the-mill, routine, commonplace developments which the prominence of his theme might have led us to expect. Here, the irony lies in the fact that Everyman turns to his best help, not first, but only after he has been repulsed everywhere else. (Everyman's action here is typical of humanity's confusion about values.) Then, the easy and expected thing for the author to do would have been to have Good Deeds rescue Everyman from his plight immediately. But we have further irony: such on-the-spot assistance is impossible. And it may not be pushing the irony too far to point out that the reason in this case is the same reason given by Goods: Good Deeds is fettered—bound. Note that in each case the fetters are symbols, but symbols, of course, of different things: what are the symbolic meanings?

But Good Deeds, though, like Goods, she cannot go with Everyman, can send him to her sister Knowledge, who will tell him what to do; and the process of Everyman's salvation is thus begun. It is not necessary for us to follow in detail Everyman's changing situation. We should note, of course, that the subsequent episode with Confession and Penance has much less dramatic force than any scene which occurred thus far. Here the *sermon* takes precedence of the *drama:* the author is finishing one part of his theme and is looking forward to another part of it to be developed later.

But, on the whole, this part of the play still has considerable dramatic force, a dramatic force which grows out of the change of mood as Everyman feels overwhelming relief in his discovery at last, of trustworthy friends. In fact, here is a kind of summation and knitting together of the first three parts: the resolution of the original issue, which was Everyman's terror at being abandoned, at having to take a dreadful journey alone. He now feels comforted and strong. The author's bringing upon the stage a whole company of sympathetic counselors and friends builds up for the audience a sense of Everyman's increased security. They are the source of his changed feelings, and at the same time they become a kind of visible symbol of his new sense of security.

Note the effective touch of Kindred's sticking his head in and repeating

that he won't go along. Once so shocking to Everyman, his refusal is now meaningless: it now actually reinforces the sense of Everyman's safety which has been produced. No one even bothers to answer Kindred.

It looks at this point as if everything is settled and the author is ready for a "happy ending."

Part IV: The Complication of Theme. But the author, as we have already suggested, has elected to introduce a further complication. The very company on whom Everyman has been instructed to rely on his journey to the grave begins to fall away as he approaches the grave. With regard to the theological meaning, this complication allows the author to make a further point about man's relation to death, namely, that at death man must give up not only physical but also certain more abstract endowments. But on the dramatic level, the complication is more important still: it permits the author to create another suspense which will take the place of the suspense which has been relaxed. In other words, the author has not wished to seem to take the fact of death too lightly: even in the contrite and repentant man, death begets a proper seriousness and a proper fear. The shrinking back of one pilgrim after another emphasizes this sense of fear and makes Everyman seem a *human* being with normal, human hopes and fears, and not a rather unreal—because incredibly complacent—convert.

The Growth of Everyman's Character. This process of humanizing Everyman is accompanied by a process of character development: Everyman, as he begins his journey to the grave, is no longer the rather callow and terrified person that he appeared to be at the beginning of the play. His eyes have now been opened; the ordinary illusions have fallen from him; he has knowledge of the slipperiness and falsity of the world, and, indeed, he has acquired a certain moral toughness.

This new quality comes out very plainly in the passage in which Beauty repudiates Everyman. Consider the whole passage (beginning with line [illegible]). After the promises made [illegible] by Strength, Discretion, and Knowl- [illegible] for the journey and filled with [illegible] [illegible]d by his companions But just at this high point of courage, when he addresses the company as friends and says to them "Let us not turn again to this land . . . For into this cave must I creep"—just at this moment [illegible] [illegible] "Ye[illegible] [illegible] more and less." The answer is a sorrowful one, but it is important to note that Everyman himself is here the [illegible] who can explain to Beauty the worst that can befall

One may put the matter in somewhat different fashion by saying that in this part of the play the author is developing the process of disillusionment on a much higher level. For, now, at this point in the play, it is not the outside world which is deserting Everyman at the approach of death, but the very qualities and faculties of the man himself which are deserting him. The inner citadel, as it were, is going down under the attack.

Everyman's cry, "Now, Jesu help! all hath forsaken me!" comes therefore with special poignance. Everyman is, at this stage of the play, not the man easily disappointed; he has been chastened. For the same reason, Good Deeds's final promise to abide with him, too, comes with special force: it is a promise made in the face of full knowledge of the terror which has caused all the other supporters to flee.

What, then, of the refusal of Knowledge to accompany Everyman into the grave with Good Deeds? Truth to the allegory demands that the author have Knowledge refuse—a man cannot take his knowledge with him into the grave. Yet, dramatically considered, will not the refusal of Knowledge come as an anticlimax after the high point which we have reached with Good Deeds's promise not to forsake Everyman?

Significant Variation. Here, as we shall see, the author has given us a very fine example of *significant variation* (see Glossary). Throughout the play, we have witnessed Everyman's repeated plea for companionship, and have heard the request in all but one instance refused. When Everyman turns to Knowledge and asks whether Knowledge will forsake him, the reply, "Yea, Everyman, when ye to death shall go," on one level echoes the reply which we have heard so often throughout the play. But here it comes with very different effect. We may say that the refusal itself, here, turns into a sort of comforting assurance. Coming from Knowledge, who has been what might be called the presiding genius of the play, it cannot be equated with the cowardly and selfish refusals which superficially it resembles. Indeed, as Knowledge continues his speech, the refusal itself, as we have said, becomes a guarantee of continued watchfulness and supervision. Knowledge will not have to desert Everyman until the fact of death itself, and not before Knowledge has seen him safely through his ordeal. Man cannot take his knowledge with him into the grave, but by means of Knowledge, man can see what will happen to him beyond the grave.

Again, then, we see the allegory asserting itself, but, as before, being humanized and made dramatically meaningful. The author achieves a richer and more moving effect by having Knowledge unable to follow Everyman than he would have secured by having both Good Deeds and Knowledge descend with Everyman into the grave.

Summary. We began this analysis by saying that *Everyman* was a dramatized parable. We pointed out that the dramatization of a theme is more vivid and moving than is an abstract statement of the theme. We pointed out further that a theme is to some extent qualified and modified in the process of dramatization, and that the emotional power which the dramatization provides, itself springs from the fact that we are not *given* a statement but are forced to develop our own attitudes and to make our own interpretations.

How are these propositions illustrated by *Everyman?* Suppose that we consider the matter in this way. Had the author of *Everyman* conceived his play as propaganda for the Christian way of life even more narrowly than he has, he might have been tempted to leave out such bits of humor as

Cousin's reply to Everyman: "No, by our Lady; I have a cramp in my toe." Such humor, he might have felt, was unseemly in such a play, and might detract from the seriousness of the attitude he wishes to provoke in his audience. To pass on to a much more serious matter, he might have further decided that he ought not to play up the terror of death in Everyman *after* Everyman had repented and set his account in order.

It is perfectly true that, in the play as we have it, Everyman does go to his death with a deep and sincere confidence in the Christian hope of the resurrection. Yet a narrow propagandist might conceivably have felt that he ought not to seem to weaken Everyman's confidence at all. And cer- [illegible]

[illegible]

Christianity. The play is a very fine and relatively uncomplicated treatment of the Christian theme. But it is important to observe that even so simple a treatment of the theme as one finds in this play is not so simple as a purely abstract account of it would be, and [illegible] that the play is as good a play as it is because the author was willing to write as a dramatist and not as a *mere propagandist*.

One may make the same general point in terms of the symbolism. The play is an allegory, which, though simple, is not purely mechanical. The author is willing and able to provide some hints of a [illegible] and more [illegible] symbolism. The "meaning" is not exhausted by our referring each part of the play to its place in the allegorical scheme as we might with a key to the allegory. Allegory in the play there is, and the principal meaning of the play is allegorical, but we have the beginnings of that richer and more manysided symbolism which any good play involves, and which we find in its most magnificent form perhaps in some of the greater plays of Shakespeare.

To sum up: we may say that good drama is always meaningful, and probably is ultimately always moral; but the reader who is looking only for the "moral," or who indulges merely in "message-hunting," or, in general, is willing to see a play as merely the illustration of a special [illegible] will be misreading the play.

Everyman AS TRAGEDY

We should, finally, give at least passing attention to [illegible] *Everyman* which may *suggest that* it should be called a [illegible] fact that the play deals with serious issues suggests a [illegible] and the fact *that* the protagonist dies will, for many [illegible] sumption that it is a tragedy. It is probable, indeed, [illegible] that tragedy is synonymous with an unhappy ending [illegible] protagonist, in terms of this same logic, is [illegible]

Yet *Everyman*, it ought to be pretty clearly [illegible]

even though it does concern itself with serious issues. And it ought to be even more clearly evident that the conventional assumptions about tragedy which would make it a tragedy require drastic qualification. The death of Everyman, for instance—regardless of whether or not it is "tragic" —is certainly not "unhappy." There is a sense in which Everyman at his death is profoundly happy. We shall need much more precise definitions of tragedy than this if we are to come to any understanding of drama.

It is not wise at this point to attempt any elaborate discussion of the nature of tragedy. That can best be undertaken a little later in this manual and in connection with plays which raise the problem of tragedy in more explicit form. Yet even so, a few generalizations on the subject here may not be amiss.

In the first place the mere death of the protagonist has little to do with tragedy. For example, consider: the death of a good person who is the victim of malice; the death of a good person by a chance accident; the death of a gangster, either at the hand of the state or at the hands of another gangster; the death of a person who dies happily in a good cause. Could any of these taken as such be regarded as tragic? It ought to be clear that we cannot respond to all these deaths in the same way, but that they will affect us in a variety of ways. We may feel shocked; we may rejoice; we may remain indifferent; we may be moved to pity; our attitude may be not simple at all but may blend one feeling with another.

The fact of death, then, affects us in various ways and depends for its effect on the circumstances which attend it. Any definition of tragedy which depends, therefore, merely on the fact that the protagonist dies is hopelessly vague. The character of the protagonist and the nature of his struggle with circumstance or his fellows or with himself is much more to the point in developing a workable definition of tragedy.

A few generalizations, however, are so obvious that they can be made, here and now. First, the protagonist must struggle, for, if he is unable to struggle or is too passive to struggle, we can feel no more than pity for him. The death of a child, for example, may be pathetic, but it cannot be tragic. Second, we must feel some sympathy for the protagonist in his struggle: if his death merely gives us satisfaction or, worse still for the purposes of drama, leaves us indifferent, there can be no tragedy. Third, there must be in the protagonist some limitation or failure—else we shall probably feel no more than the pure pathos of his death, or that his death is unfair and and undeserved.

In the second play which follows, Lillo's *George Barnwell*, we shall have an opportunity to explore much more thoroughly what the character of the tragic protagonist must be and must not be. But even here we shall probably not find a complete answer to the nature of tragedy in the light of which we shall be able to see fully why *Everyman* is, though a serious play, not a tragedy. The full answer probably will have to wait upon our examination of other plays.

QUESTIONS

1. Beauty, in refusing to go with Everyman into the grave, uses the same oath ("By Saint John") that Fellowship has used earlier in the play in making the same refusal. What is gained by this parallelism? Does it help make the abstract character, Beauty, seem credibly human? Help enforce the essential loneliness of Everyman?

2. Review all the speeches of refusal to accompany Everyman. Note how many of the characters use homely turns of phrase ("I take my cap in my lap and am gone," "Thy game liketh me not at all") and understatement. What is gained by these devices?

3. As Everyman and Good Deeds prepare to descend into the grave, Good Deeds says, "Short our end, and minish our pain." Properly speaking Good Deeds does not suffer pain. Defend, on dramatic grounds, the author's use of *our* here.

4. We have pointed out that, although the play has no formal division into scenes, the play actually falls into four divisions. How has the author suggested these divisions by his arrangement of speeches or his management of the action?

5. Goods comes close to being the real villain of the piece. He mocks Everyman overtly in his last speech. Yet does not Goods really show a scrupulous neutrality? This may be very shrewd on the part of the author. He even makes Goods point out that he would have been transmuted into Everyman's true friend Good Deeds (with whom he is ironically linked by name) if only Everyman had "to the poor . . give part of me." What is the effect of this paradox in emphasizing Everyman's own responsibility as a free agent? That is, does it lessen any impression we might have that Everyman is a victim of circumstances?

6. Primarily the author uses God, of course, to set up the moral issues of the play. Does the author attempt more than that in his initial presentation of God? Does he try to "characterize" Him at all? To make the first scene dramatic as well as homiletic?

7. Can you find any of the lines by which the author endeavors to suggest changes of place to the audience? How much care does he take in this matter?

8. What lines in the first scene point ahead to Everyman's interview with Goods?

9. Has the author succeeded at all in universalizing Fellowship? That is, in giving him qualities which we of a later generation find entirely recognizable? Are there any familiar idioms here (as well as elsewhere in the play)?

10. Is there anything ironic in the fact that Fellowship exclaims "in faith" in l. 232 and again "in good faith" in l. 280?

11. What do we learn about Fellowship from the fact that he says finally that he would not go with Everyman even if he were given a new gown (l. 292)?

3. Plautus, *The Twin Menaechmi*

We turn next to one of the best-known Roman comedies, Plautus's *Menaechmi*, the date of which is in the neighborhood of 200 B.C. Here the student will recognize the basic plot of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. In Plautus's play we find in practically pure form the simple comic type known as farce. As the student reads, he may find it useful to observe the ways in which its effects differ from those of *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

THE TWIN MENAECHMI [1]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

BRUSH (PENICULUS), *a parasite*
MENAECHMUS I, *a young man of Epidamnus*
EROTIUM, *a courtesan*
CYLINDRUS, *cook of* EROTIUM
MENAECHMUS II (SOSICLES), *a young man of Syracuse*
MESSENIO, *slave of* MENAECHMUS II
MAID *of* EROTIUM
WIFE *of* MENAECHMUS I
FATHER, *an old man, father-in-law of* MENAECHMUS I
A DOCTOR
SLAVES

[SCENE: A Street in Epidamnus in front of the houses of Menaechmus I and Erotium.]

PROLOGUE

Nor first and above all, spectators, I'm bringing a few
Of the best of good wishes to me—and then also to you;
I'm bringing you Plautus—by mouth, of course, not in person,
And therefore I pray you receive him with kindliest ears.
To the argument gird up your minds, as I babble my verse,
And I shall explain it—in briefest of terms, have no fears.
And this is the thing that poets do in their plays:
The action has all taken place in Athens, they say,
That the setting will seem to be Greek to you all the more.
But from me you'll hear the truth—where it actually happened.
The plot of the play, to be sure, is Greek, but not
Of the Attic variety; Sicilian, rather.
I've given you now of the argument merely the preface;
And next the plot I'll generously pour out
Not merely by peck or bushel, but by the whole barn,
So kindly a nature I have for telling the plot.
Now, an old merchant was living in Syracuse city,
And he by some chance had a couple of twin sons—yes, two of 'em—

[1] Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc. The translation is by Edward C. Weist and Richard W. Hyde: Acts II and V, by Weist; Acts I, III, and IV, by Hyde.

And they looked so alike that the nurse couldn't tell (more's the pity)
Which one she gave suck to; no more could their mother, for whom
The nurse was called in, no, not even their mother who'd borne 'em.
Much later, the boys being now about seven years old,
Their father filled up a big ship with a lot of his goods
And, putting one twin in safekeeping with them in the hold,
Betook himself off to Tarentum to market, to turn 'em
To cash; and the other twin stayed at home with his mother.
When they got there, Tarentum was holding some games, as it happened,
And people were flocking to town, as they do for the games.
The little boy strayed from his father among all the crowds;
The lost was soon found by a rich Epidamnian merchant
Who seized him and took him off home But the father
Was sadly dejected at heart at the loss of the boy,
And only a little while later he died of despair.
Syracuse at last heard the bad news that the father was dead
And that someone had stolen the twin who had wandered away.
So the grandfather changed the remaining twin's name then and there,
Since the other had been so beloved—the one stolen away.
The other one's name he bestowed on the twin safe at home,
And called him Menaechmus, the same as the one I have said.
The grandfather's name was Menaechmus too, it so happened,
And with ease I remember the name, as they called it aloud.
And lest you get muddled, both twins now have the same name.
But now on the poet's rude feet I must seek Epidamnus,
To speed on my tale. Should anyone wish to have business
Transacted there, let him be bold and speak forth and give me
The money with which I may carry out all his commands
But unless the money's forthcoming, he's wasting his time,
And he's wasting his time even more, should the money be given.
And while standing still I've returned to my point of departure.
The old merchant I told you about, who kidnapped the boy,
Had no children whatever, unless you should count all his money.[1]
He adopted the stolen young twin as his son, and to him
Gave a wife and a dowry, and made him his heir when he died.
For, wandering into the country not far from the town, the
Epidamnian stepped in a freshet, where torrents of rain
Had been falling, the current caught quickly the kidnapper's feet
And carried him off to the place where he'll get his deserts.
So from him the young man inherits a plentiful fortune,
And this is the house where the rich kidnapped twin is now dwelling.
The other twin, living in Syracuse, comes with his slave
To find his own twin brother here, for whom he's been searching
While the play's being acted, the town's Epidamnus, you see,
When another play comes, 'twill turn into some other town.
And then the families in the houses will change;
The inhabitant is now a pander, and now a youth,
Or a pauper, a beggar, a parasite, or a prophet.

[1] There was apparently a jest here in the Greek original (which lies behind Plautus' Latin adaptation) The Greek word τόκος means both "children" and "interest on money"

ACT ONE. SCENE I

[*Enter Brush, who addresses audience.*]

Brush: My nickname's Brush, because when I eat I sweep the table clean. People who keep prisoners in chains and put shackles on runaway slaves do a very foolish thing, if you ask me. You see, if you add insult to injury, a poor fellow will want all the more to escape and go wrong. He'll get out of his chains somehow, you can be sure—file away a link, or knock out a nail with a stone. That way's no good. If you really want to keep somebody so he won't get away, you'd better tie him with food and drink: hitch his beak to a full dinnerpail. Give him all he wants to eat and drink every day, and he'll never try to run away, not even if he's committed murder. The bonds of food and drink are very elastic, you know: the more you stretch them, the tighter they hold you. [*Going towards the house of Menaechmus I.*] Now take me—I'm on my way over to Menaechmus', where I've been doing a long stretch; I'm giving myself up to let him bind me. He doesn't only feed you, you see: he builds you up and makes a new man of you. There's no better doctor alive. Just to show you what sort of fellow he is—he has wonderful meals, regular Thanksgiving dinners: he builds up such skyscrapers of dishes you have to stand on your couch if you want to get anything off the top. But it's quite a few days since I've been over there. I've been kept at home with my dear ones—I don't eat or buy anything but what it's very dear. But now my army of dear ones is deserting, and so I'm going to see him. [*He approaches the door.*] But the door's opening. There's Menaechmus—he's coming out. [*Withdraws.*]

ACT ONE. SCENE II

[*Enter Menaechmus I from his house, wearing a dress of his wife's under his own cloak. He calls back to his wife inside.*]

Menaechmus I:
If you were not
Stubborn, bad,
Stupid, and a
Little mad,
What your husband hates, you'd see
And behave accordingly.
Act the way you have today
And back you go to dad to stay.
If I say I'm going out,
You're on hand to ask about
Where I'm going,
What to do,
What's my business,
What's for you.
I can't get out anywhere
But you want me to declare
All I've done and all I do.
Customs officer—that's you!
I've handled you with too much care;
Listen what I'm going to do:
Food I give you,
Maids, indeed,
Money, dresses—
All you need;
Now you'll keep your spying eyes
Off your husband, if you're wise.

And furthermore I'll see that you don't have your watching for nothing: I'm going to get even with you and take a woman out to dinner somewhere.

Brush: [*Aside.*] The fellow pretends he's cursing his wife, but he's really cursing me. It's me he hurts if he eats out, not his wife.

Menaechmus I: Gosh! At last I've scolded my wife away from the door. [*To the audience.*] Where are all you philandering husbands? What are you waiting for? Come on up and congratulate me and reward me for the good fight I've put up—I've just stolen this dress from my wife in there and I'm taking it to my mistress. This is a fine way to cheat this clever guardian of mine. An excellent job, an honest job, an elegant job, a workmanlike job! I risked my life and robbed my wife, and the thing's going to be a total loss. But I got the spoils from the enemy and didn't lose a man.

Brush: [*Accosting him.*] Hey, young fellow, is any of that stuff for me?

Menaechmus I: It's all over. I've fallen into a trap

Brush: Oh no, sir, just into protective custody. Don't be alarmed.

Menaechmus I: Who are you?

Brush: Myself.

Menaechmus I [*Turning.*] Why, you sight for sore eyes, you chance that comes once in a lifetime! Good morning.

Brush: Good morning.

Menaechmus I: What are you doing?

Brush: I'm shaking hands with my best friend.

Menaechmus I: You couldn't have come at a better time than this.

Brush: That's just like me: I'm quite an expert on opportune moments.

Menaechmus I. Want to see something gorgeous?

Brush: What cook cooked it? I'll know if he slipped up when I see what's left.

Menaechmus I. Say, did you ever see the painting on the temple wall where the eagle steals Ganymede, or where Venus gets away with Adonis?

Brush: Plenty of times But what have those pictures got to do with me?

Menaechmus I. [*Revealing the dress.*] Take a look at me. Do I look like them at all?

Brush: What's that outfit you're wearing?

Menaechmus I. Say I'm a clever fellow.

Brush. When do we eat?

Menaechmus I. You just say what I tell you

Brush. All right. "Clever Fellow"

Menaechmus I: Can't you add anything of your own?

Brush: Well—life of the party

Menaechmus I. Go on, go on

Brush: I certainly will not go on unless I know what I'm going to get out of it. You've had a quarrel with your wife and I'm staying on the safe side.

Menaechmus I. What do you say we find a place away from my wife where we can have a funeral—and then we burn up the day?

Brush: [*Enthusiastically.*] Wonderful! Let's get going. How soon do I light the pyre? The day's already dead up to the waist.

Menaechmus I: You'll wait if you interrupt me.

Brush: Knock my eye out, Menaechmus, if I say a word except when you tell me.

Menaechmus I. Come over here away from the door.

Brush: Sure.

Menaechmus I: Farther still

Brush: All right.

Menaechmus I. Now come boldly away from the lion's den

Brush Say there, I've got an idea you'd make a good racing driver.

Menaechmus I How come?

Brush: Well, you're always looking back to see that your wife isn't following you

Menaechmus I But what do you say—

Brush What do I say? Why, anything you want, my friend.

Menaechmus I: I wonder if you could make a guess from the odor of a thing if you smelt it

Brush . . [1] if you got the whole staff

Menaechmus I Well, take a sniff of this dress I've got How does it smell? Don't hang back

Brush You ought to smell the top of a woman's dress, the smell down there is awful

Menaechmus I Then smell here, Brush How dainty you are!

Brush This is better

Menaechmus I How about it? What does it smell like? Tell me.

Brush A moocher, a mistress, and a meal!

Menaechmus I Now I'll take this to

[1] There is a short lacuna in the text here.

my lady Erotium here, and I'll order dinner for all three of us.

Brush: Swell!

Menaechmus I: After that we'll drink right through till daylight tomorrow.

Brush: Swell! You've said a mouthful. Do I knock now?

Menaechmus I: Go ahead. Or wait a minute.

Brush: Oh, you're holding up our drinking a mile.

Menaechmus I: Knock softly.

Brush: I suppose you're afraid the door is made of Samian ware.

Menaechmus I: Wait, for heaven's sake, wait! Look. She's coming out herself. Do you see how dim the sun is compared to the splendour of her beauty?

ACT ONE. SCENE III

[*Enter Erotium from her house.*]

Erotium: Good morning, Menaechmus, my sweet.

Brush: How about me?

Erotium: You don't count with me.

Brush: That's what usually happens to the reserves in an army.

Menaechmus I: I'd like you to do something for him and me over at your house—get ready a battle.

Erotium: It shall be done.

Menaechmus I: And we'll both drink in this battle, and which is the better battler will be found by the bottle. You're head of the army, and you'll decide which of us—you'll spend the night with. O my heart's delight, how I detest my wife when I set my eyes on you!

Erotium: [*Noticing the dress.*] Still, you can't keep from wearing her clothes. What's this?

Menaechmus I: Your dress and my wife's *un*dress, rosebud.

Erotium: You're an easy winner over all the others who possess me.

Brush: [*Aside.*] The woman flatters him as long as she sees what he's stolen. [*To Erotium.*] Now, if you really loved him, you'd have bitten his nose off with kisses.

Menaechmus I: Hold this, Brush. [*Handing him his cloak.*] I want to make the offering I have vowed.

Brush: Let's have it. But please, dance with that dress on like that.

Menaechmus I: Me dance? You're as crazy as they come.

Brush: Maybe you're the crazy one. But if you won't dance, take the thing off.

Menaechmus I: [*Removing dress.*] I took a big chance stealing this—bigger than Hercules did, I guess, when he stole Hippolyta's girdle. [*Handing the dress to Erotium.*] Here, my dear. You're the only one who really understands me.

Erotium: That's how true lovers should feel.

Brush: [*Aside.*] At least ones who are on their way to the poorhouse.

Menaechmus I: That cost me four minae last year when I bought it for my wife.

Brush: [*Aside.*] Four minae gone to the devil, when you add up your accounts.

Menaechmus I: Do you know what I want you to do?

Erotium: Tell me; I'll do anything you wish.

Menaechmus I: Then have a dinner for the three of us at your house. And get some fine food at the market—

The son of a glandule of pork,
The son of a fattened ham,
Or the jowl of a hog—
Some food of that sort
Which set on the table
Will tickle my palate
And give me the gorge of a kite.

And hurry up.

Erotium: Very well.

Menaechmus I: We'll go on downtown, but we'll be back soon. While the dinner's being cooked, we'll pass the time drinking.

Erotium: Come whenever you wish; everything will be ready.

Menaechmus I: Hurry now. [*To Brush.*] You follow me.

Brush: I'll watch you and follow you, all right. I wouldn't lose you for all the wealth of heaven. [*Menaechmus and Brush depart.*]

Erotium: [*To those inside.*] You in there, call out my cook Cylindrus at once.

ACT ONE. SCENE IV

[*Enter Cylindrus.*]

Erotium: Take a basket and some money. Here are three nummi.

Cylindrus: Yes, ma'am.

Erotium: Go and get some provisions See that there's enough for three, not too little and not too much.

Cylindrus: What kind of people will they be?

Erotium: Menaechmus and his parasite and I.

Cylindrus: That makes ten, then, because a parasite does as well as eight ordinary men.

Erotium: I've told you the guests, take care of the rest.

Cylindrus: All right. Everything's done. Tell them dinner is served

Erotium: Hurry back. [*She goes into her house.*]

Cylindrus: I'm practically back now [*Cylindrus departs.*]

ACT TWO. SCENE I

[*Enter Menaechmus II, and his slave Messenio carrying a bag, followed by sailors with luggage.*]

Menaechmus II: I think, Messenio, that there is no greater joy for sea travellers than sighting land.

Messenio: Yes, but it's still better if it's your own land. Why, I ask you, have we come here—why Epidamnus? We might as well be the ocean: we never miss a single island.

Menaechmus II: [*Sadly.*] We are searching for my twin brother.

Messenio: Is this search ever going to end? It's six years now that we've spent on it. We've seen 'em all—Istrians, Iberians, the people of Marseilles, Illyrians, the whole Adriatic, all of Magna Graecia, the whole Italian seacoast. If you'd been hunting for a needle you'd have found it long ago, if there had been one. We're looking for a dead man among the living; if he were alive you'd have found him long ago

Menaechmus II: If I can find somebody who can prove that, who can say he knows for certain that my brother is dead, then I shall seek no further. But otherwise I shall go on as long as I live; I know how dear he is to my heart.

Messenio: You might as well try to find a knot in a bulrush. Let's clear out of here and go home. Or are we going to write a book—"Our Trip around the World"?

Menaechmus II You do what you're told, take what's given you, and keep out of trouble. Don't annoy me. I'm running this, not you.

Messenio. [*Aside*] Hm-m, that puts me in my place all right Neat, complete, it can't be beat. But just the same, here I go again [*Aloud.*] Look at our purse, Menaechmus, our money is feeling the heat it's getting as thin as a summer shirt. If you don't go home, you'll be hunting for that blessed brother of yours without a cent to bless yourself with That's what Epidamnus is like, full of rakes and tremendous drinkers, a lot of swindlers and spongers live here, and everybody knows their women are the most seductive in the whole world That's why the place is called Epidamnus, scarcely anybody can come here without getting damned

Menaechmus II I'll take care of that just hand the purse over to me

Messenio: What for?

Menaechmus II. What you say makes me worried—about you

Messenio: Makes you worried?

Menaechmus II: That you may get yourself damned in Epidamnus. You are

very fond of the ladies, Messenio, and I have a bad temper and lose it very easily. So if I have the money, you get double protection: your foot doesn't slip, and my temper doesn't either.

Messenio: [*Handing it over.*] Take it, keep it; it's all right with me.

ACT TWO. SCENE II

[*Enter Cylindrus the cook, with his market-basket.*]

Cylindrus: [*To himself.*] I've done a good job of marketing—just what I like myself. I'll give the company a fine dinner.—Glory, there's Menaechmus! Now I'm in for it! Here are the guests at the door before I'm back from the market. I'll go up and speak to him. [*To Menaechmus II.*] Good day, Menaechmus.

Menaechmus II: Why, thank you. [*To Messenio.*] He seems to know my name. Who is he?

Messenio: I don't know.

Cylindrus: Where are the other guests?

Menaechmus II: What guests?

Cylindrus: [*Grinning.*] Your parasite.

Menaechmuse II: [*To Messenio.*] My parasite? The man's crazy.

Messenio: Didn't I tell you there were a lot of swindlers here?

Menaechmus II: [*To Cylindrus.*] What do you mean "my parasite," young man?

Cylindrus: Why, "Brush."

Messenio: [*Peering into the bag.*] Nonsense, I have your brush safe right here in the bag.

Cylindrus: You are a little early for dinner, Menaechmus; I'm just back from the market.

Menaechmus II: Tell me, young man: how much do pigs cost here? Grade A pigs, for sacrifice.

Cylindrus: A drachma.

Menaechmus II: Well, here's a drachma; go get yourself cured at my expense. Because you certainly must be crazy, what's-your-name, to be bothering a perfect stranger like me.

Cylindrus: "What's-your-name"! Don't you remember me? I'm Cylindrus.

Menaechmus II: The devil take you, whether your name is Cylinder or Colander. I don't know you, and I don't want to.

Cylindrus: [*Persisting.*] Your name is Menaechmus.

Menaechmus II: You're in your right mind when you call me by name, anyway. But where did you ever see me before?

Cylindrus: Where did I ever see you before—when my mistress, Erotium, is your mistress?

Menaechmus II: Confound it, she's not my mistress, and I don't know you, either.

Cylindrus: All the drinks I've poured for you in the house here, and you don't know me?

Messenio: I wish I had something to break his head with.

Menaechmus II: You pour my drinks for me, do you? When I've never set foot in Epidamnus before today and never even seen the place?

Cylindrus: You deny it?

Menaechmus II: Of course I deny it.

Cylindrus: Don't you live in that house over there?

Menaechmus II: The devil take the people that do!

Cylindrus: [*Aside.*] If he curses himself like this, *he's* crazy. [*Aloud.*] Menaechmus!

Menaechmus II: Well?

Cylindrus: If you ask me, you ought to take that drachma you—promised me a minute ago and order *yourself* a pig, because your head isn't on straight either, you know, if you curse your own self.

Menaechmus II: Confound your cheek, you chatterbox! [*Turns away.*]

Cylindrus: [*Aside.*] He likes to joke with me like this. Always full of laughs—when his wife's not there! [*To Menaechmus II.*] Well, sir—[*No response.*]

Well, sir—[*Menaechmus II turns.*] Is this enough for the three of you—you, the parasite, and the lady—or shall I get some more?

Menaechmus II: What "parasites"? What "ladies"?

Messenio: [*To Cylindrus.*] Here, what's the matter with you? Why are you pestering the gentleman?

Cylindrus: Who are you, and what's it to you? I'm talking to *him;* he's a friend of mine.

Messenio: You're cracked, that's certain.

Cylindrus: [*To Menaechmus II.*] I'll get these things into the pot right away, so don't wander off too far from the house. Anything else I can do for you?

Menaechmus II: Yes Go to the devil.

Cylindrus: Oh, better that you should—go inside and make yourself comfortable on your couch, while Vulcan is getting violent with the food. I'll go in and tell Erotium that you're here. I know she'd rather take you in than make you wait outside. [*He goes into the house of Erotium*]

Menaechmus II: Is he gone? Good, When I I see there was a lot in what you said.

Messenio: Yes, but look out. I think one of those fancy women lives here, just as that crackpot said.

Menaechmus II: All the same, I wonder how he knew my name

Messenio: Nothing strange in that, it's just the way these women have. They send their maids and slave-boys to the harbour; and if a foreign ship comes in, they find out the name of the owner and where he's from, and then, bingo! they fasten onto him and stick to him like glue If he falls for it, they send him home a ruined man [*Pointing to house of Erotium.*] Now in that harbour rides a pirate craft, of which we must beware.

Menaechmus II That's good advice

Messenio Yes, but it's no good unless you take it. [*The door starts to open.*]

Menaechmus II Quiet a minute, I hear the door opening. Let's see wh[o] comes out.

Messenio: [*Putting down the bag.*] I'l[l] set this down then. You sailors, keep an eye on the luggage

ACT TWO, SCENE III

[*Enter Erotium from her house.*]

Erotium: [*To slaves within.*]

Go in, and do not close the door,
I want it left just so
See what there is to do inside
And do it all—now go
The couches must be spread, and perfumes burned:
Neatness entices lovers, I have learned.
Splendour to lovers' loss, to our gain is turned
[*Coming forward.*]
But where is the man they said was before my door?
Ah, there he is, he's been of use before;
Yet is, as he deserves, my governor.
I'll go and speak to him myself —My dear,
I am amazed to see you standing here;
My home is always yours when you appear.
Now all you ordered is prepared,
The doors are opened wide,
Your dinner's cooked, and when you like
Come take your place inside.

Menaechmus II [*To Messenio*] Who's this woman talking to?

Erotium To you!

Menaechmus II But why? We've never—

Erotium Because it is the will of Venus that I exalt you above all others, and so I should, because you're the one who keeps me blooming with your loving favours

Menaechmus II [*To Messenio*] This woman is either insane or drunk, Messenio. Such language, to a perfect stranger!

Messenio [*To Menaechmus II*] Didn't I tell you that was the way here? Why, these are just falling leaves, stay

here a couple of days, and there'll be *trees* falling on you. These women look like pick-ups, but they're not; they're just stick-ups.—Let me talk to her. [*To Erotium.*] Listen, lady—

Erotium: What?

Messenio: Where did you get so familiar with the gentleman?

Erotium: In the same place where he got so familiar with me—here, in Epidamnus.

Messenio: In Epidamnus? He never set so much as his foot in the place until today.

Erotium: Oh, what a ravishing sense of humour! [*To Menaechmus II.*] Menaechmus dear, won't you come in? We can straighten this out so much better inside.

Menaechmus II: [*To Messenio.*] And now she calls me by name too. What's going on here?

Messenio: [*To Menaechmus II.*] She's got a whiff of that purse of yours.

Menaechmus II: [*To Messenio.*] You're probably right. Here, take it. [*Hands him the purse.*] Now I'll see which she loves, me or the money.

Erotium: Let's go in to dinner.

Menaechmus II: You are very kind, but [*backing away*] no, thank you.

Erotium: But you just told me to fix a dinner for you.

Menaechmus II: I told you to?

Erotium: Why, yes, for you and your parasite.

Menaechmus II: What parasite, confound it? [*To Messenio.*] She's crazy.

Erotium: Brush.

Menaechmus II: What is this brush you all keep talking about? You mean my shoe-brush?

Erotium: No, of course I mean the Brush who came with you when you brought me the dress you had stolen from your wife.

Menaechmus II: What? I gave you a dress that I had stolen from my wife? You're out of your mind! [*To Messenio.*] Why, this woman dreams standing up, like a horse.

Erotium: Why do you make fun of me, and deny what you did?

Menaechmus II: Well, what *did* I do?

Erotium: You gave me a dress of your wife's today.

Menaechmus II: I still deny it. I haven't got a wife and I never had one, and I never set foot in this house before. I had dinner on the boat, came ashore, walked by here, and ran into you.

Erotium: [*Frightened.*] Oh, my goodness, what boat?

Menaechmus II:

A wooden boat—oft sprung, oft plugged, oft struck with maul,
And peg lies close by peg, as in a furrier's frame.

Erotium: Oh, please stop joking and come in.

Menaechmus II: But madam, you are looking for somebody else, not me.

Erotium: Do you think I don't know Menaechmus, son of Moschus, born at Syracuse in Sicily where Agathocles was king, and then Phintia, and then Liparo, who left it to Hiero, who is king now?

Menaechmus II: That's all correct.

Messenio: [*To Menaechmus II.*] Good lord, the woman can't be from there herself, can she? She certainly has you down pat.

Menaechmus II: [*Weakening.*] You know, I don't see how I can refuse. [*He starts towards the door.*]

Messenio: Don't! If you go in there, you're done for!

Menaechmus II: Be quiet. Things are going nicely. Whatever she says, I'll agree to it, and see if I can pick up some entertainment! [*To Erotium.*] I've had a reason for contradicting you all this time: I was afraid this man would tell my wife about the dress and the dinner. But now let's go in, anytime you want.

Erotium: Are you going to wait for the parasite any longer?

Menaechmus II: No! I don't give a rap for him, and if he comes I don't want him let in.

Erotium: That's quite all right with

me. But there's something I wish you'd do for me, will you?

Menaechmus II: Anything; command me.

Erotium: That dress you just gave me—take it to the place where they do that lovely gold embroidery and get them to fix it up and put on some new trimming.

Menaechmus II: Splendid idea! And that'll keep my wife from recognising it, if she sees it on the street.

Erotium: You can take it with you when you go.

Menaechmus II: I certainly will!

Erotium: Let's go in.

Menaechmus II: I'll be right with you. I just want to speak to this man a minute. [*Erotium goes into her house.*] Hi there, Messenio, come here.

Messenio: What's going on here? Come to your senses!

Menaechmus II What for!

Messenio: Because—

Menaechmus II: Oh, I know, don't say it.

Messenio: So much the worse

Menaechmus II: The booty is as good as in my hands right now; the siege has …ust begun! [*Pointing to the sailors.*] …Come on now, hustle these men off to …n inn somewhere, and then come back …r me here before sunset

Messenio: Master, you don't know …at these women are!

…*Menaechmus II:* None of that! If I do …thing foolish, it's my loss, not yours. …s woman is a silly fool. The way …gs look so far, there's booty to be … [*He goes into the house of Ero-*…]

…*essenio:* God help me! [*Calling after* …*echmus II.*] Sir! [*To himself.*] God …him, too! The pirate ship has got …innace steered straight on the … But I'm a fool to expect to con-… master He bought me to obey …ot to give him orders. [*To the* …] Come along you, so I can come …d pick him up in time. Orders is … [*They depart.*]

ACT THREE, SCENE I

[*Enter Brush from the forum.*]

Brush: [*To himself.*] Here I am over thirty years old, but I never got into a worse mess than I did today I pushed into the middle of the assembly, like a darn fool, and while I was watching things, Menaechmus sneaked away from me. He probably went off to his mistress and didn't want to take me.—Damn the man who first got the idea of holding assemblies and taking up the time of busy men! Why couldn't they pick people who aren't tied up for this sort of thing, and then if they didn't show up when the roll was called, they could pay a fine right off? There are plenty of men who only eat once a day and never get asked out to dinner or ask anyone else in They're the ones who ought to have the job of sitting in assemblies and law courts If things were run that way, I wouldn't have lost my dinner today. As sure as I'm alive, he would have given it to me —I'll go on, anyway. Maybe there'll be something left, and just the idea makes my mouth water. [*Enter Menaechmus II from Erotium's house, carrying the dress, very drunk.*] But what's this? There's Menaechmus coming out with a wreath on The dinner's over, and I've come just in time to take him home I'll see what he's up to, and then go and speak to him [*He withdraws.*]

ACT THREE SCENE II

Menaechmus II [*To Erotium within.*] Oh, can't you keep quiet? I'll have it nicely fixed for you, all right, and I'll bring it back on time. I bet you won't recognise it, it'll be so different

Brush. [*Aside.*] He's taking the dress to the embroiderer's He's finished his dinner, drunk his wine, and shut his parasite outside. I'll get even for this trick, all right, or my name's not Brush! Just watch what's coming to him!

Menaechmus II: [*To himself.*] Gods above, did you ever give more luck in a single day to a man who didn't expect it? I wined and dined with the woman, and got away with this thing [*indicating the dress*], and she won't ever see it again.

Brush: I can't hear what he's saying from over here. Is he full of food and talking about me and my dinner?

Menaechmus II: She said I stole this from my wife and gave it to her. The moment I saw she was wrong, I began to agree with her, as if we'd had some sort of deal. Whatever the woman said, I said too. Why waste words? I never had a better time at less expense.

Brush: I'm going up to the fellow. I'm itching to smack him one.

Menaechmus II: Who's this coming towards me?

Brush: What are you talking about, you feather-weight, you scum, you crook, you disgrace to humanity, you sneak, you bum? What did I ever do to you that you should wipe me out? So you sneaked away from me downtown a while ago, did you? And you had the funeral of the dinner when I wasn't there? How did you have the nerve, when it was mine as much as it was yours?

Menaechmus II: See here, young fellow, what's the idea of going around and insulting a perfect stranger like me? Are you an idiot? Or do you want to get beaten up for your words?

Brush: Huh! After the beating you've already given me!

Menaechmus II: Tell me, young fellow, what's your name?

Brush: Are you making fun of me too, as if you didn't know my name?

Menaechmus II: Well, as far as I know, I never saw you or knew of you before today. But let me tell you, whoever you are, if you want to do the right thing, don't make a nuisance of yourself.

Brush: Menaechmus, wake up!

Menaechmus II: Damn it, I am awake as far as I know.

Brush: You don't know me?

Menaechmus II: I wouldn't deny it if I did.

Brush: You don't know your own parasite?

Menaechmus II: I think you're not all there, young fellow.

Brush: Answer me this: did you steal that dress from your wife today and give it to Erotium?

Menaechmus II: Damn it, I haven't got any wife, and I didn't give any dress to Erotium or steal one.

Brush: Are *you* all there? [*Aside.*] This thing's done for! [*To Menaechmus II.*] Didn't I see you come out of there with a dress on?

Menaechmus II: Go to the devil! Do you think everybody is a rotter just because you are? Do you mean to say that I had a dress on?

Brush: I do, all right.

Menaechmus II: Why don't you go where you belong, or else get yourself purified, you imbecile?

Brush: [*Furious.*] By God, no one will ever stop me from telling your wife the whole business, just the way it happened. All your insults will come back on you. I'll see to it that you don't get away with eating that dinner. [*He goes into house of Menaechmus I.*]

Menaechmus II: What's the matter? Why is it that everyone I meet makes fun of me? But I hear the door opening.

ACT THREE. SCENE III

[*Enter Maid from house of Erotium with a bracelet in her hand.*]

Maid: Menaechmus, Erotium says she would like to have you take this bracelet along to the jeweler's. She wants you to have an ounce of gold added to it and have it done over.

Menaechmus II: Tell her I'll tend to it and anything else she wants tended to, anything at all. [*He takes the bracelet.*]

Maid: Do you know what bracelet this is?

Menaechmus II: Only that it's a gold one.

[illegible]

ste [illegible]

Maid: Come on, don't you remember? Give the bracelet back if you don't remember.

Menaechmus II: Wait a minute. Why, of course I remember. It must be the one I gave her. That's it. Where are the armlets I gave her with it?

Maid: You never gave her any.

Menaechmus II. Right you are; this was all I gave her.

Maid: I'll say you'll tend to it, then?

Menaechmus II: Yes, it'll be tended to. I'll see that the dress and the bracelet are brought back together.

Maid: [*Coaxingly.*] Please, Menaechmus dear, give me some earrings. Have them made to weigh two nummi. Then I'll be glad to see you when you come to see us.

Menaechmus II: Surely. Give me the gold and I'll pay for the work.

Maid: Oh, please, *you* give the gold, and I'll pay you back later.

Menaechmus II. No, you give it. Later I'll pay you back double.

Maid: I haven't got any.

Menaechmus II: Well, when you get some, give it to me then.

Maid. Anything else, sir?

Menaechmus II: Tell her I'll tend to the things. [*to himself, as the Maid goes inside*] and sell 'em for all they'll bring. Has she gone in? Yes; the door's shut. The gods are certainly supporting and supplying and sustaining me. But what am I waiting for when I've got a good chance to get away from this woman's place? Hurry up, Menaechmus. Forward, march! I'll take off this wreath and throw it away towards the left, then if they follow me, they'll think I've gone that way. I'll go and find my slave, if I can, and tell *him myself* about the luck the gods are giving me. [*He departs in the direction of the harbour.*]

ACT FOUR. SCENE I

[*Enter Wife and Brush from house of Menaechmus I.*]

Wife: How can I put up with married life any longer? My husband sneaks off with anything there is in the house and carries it off to his mistress.

Brush: Oh, keep quiet. I'll show you how to catch him with the goods. He had on a wreath, he was reeling drunk, and he was taking the dress he stole from you today to the embroiderer's. But look, there's the wreath. Now will you believe me? See, *this* is the way *he* went, if you want to track *him* down. [*Looking down the street.*] Well, for heaven's sake, there he is now, coming back. But he hasn't got the dress.

Wife: What'll I do to him now?

Brush. The same as usual—treat him rough. That's my advice. Let's get over here and hide from him. [*They step aside.*]

ACT FOUR. SCENE II

[*Enter Menaechmus I from the forum.*]

Menaechmus I. It's a very silly fashion and an awful nuisance, too,
That all of us obey, especially the well-to-do.
We want a lot of hangers-on, who may be good or bad.
Reputation doesn't matter when there's money to be had.
You may be poor and honest—as a fool you're sent away.
But if you're rich and wicked, you're a worthy protégé.
The lawless man, who when he's trusted with a thing will swear
He never saw it—that's the man for whom we patrons care.
The contentious man, the trickster, who by means of perjury
Or bribes supports a life of lawsuits, greed, and luxury.
But the patron has no holiday when law-days are decreed,

He must defend the guilty man and see that he is freed.
In just this way was I detained today by one poor sinner,
And now I've missed my mistress, to say nothing of my dinner.
I spoke before the aediles to allay their just suspicions,
And proposed a set of intricate and tortuous conditions
Which, if we could have proved 'em, would have surely won the case.
But then this brainless boob brought in a bondsman to the place!
I'm sure I never saw a man more clearly caught than he:
Three witnesses were there who swore to all his deviltry.
May heaven destroy the man who's *made a ruin so complete*
Of all my day—and me, who in the lawcourts set my feet!
As soon as it was possible, I came directly here.
I've ordered dinner, and she's waiting for me; yet I fear
She's mad at me now.
But the dress ought to move her
That I stole from my wife
And took to my lover.

Brush: [*Aside to Wife.*] What have you got to say now?

Wife: I'm blessed with a bad marriage and a bad husband.

Brush: Do you hear what he's saying all right?

Wife: I should say so.

Menaechmus I: Now the best thing for me to do is to go in here where I can have a good time. [*He starts towards Erotium's door, but Brush stops him.*]

Brush: Just a minute. You'll have a bad time first.

Wife: You'll pay interest on what you stole, I promise you.

Brush: Now he's getting it.

Wife: So you thought you could get away with all that crooked business, did you?

Menaechmus I: What's the matter, dear?

Wife: That's a fine thing to ask *me!*

Menaechmus I: Do you want me to ask *him*, then? [*He attempts to fondle Wife.*]

Wife: Cut out the pawing!

Brush: Keep after him, ma'am!

Menaechmus I: Why are you angry at me?

Wife: You ought to know.

Brush: He does, the scum, but he's making out he doesn't.

Menaechmus I: What's the matter?

Wife: A dress.

Menaechmus I: A dress?

Wife: A dress that someone—

Brush: What are you shaking about?

Menaechmus I: I'm not shaking about anything.

Brush: Only this: the dress does impress!—*You would sneak away from me* and eat dinner! [*To Wife.*] Keep after the fellow!

Menaechmus I: Won't you shut up?

Brush: No, by George, I will not shut up. [*To Wife.*] He's shaking his head at me to shut up.

Menaechmus I: I am not, or winking either.

Wife: Oh dear, I am an unhappy woman!

Menaechmus I: Why unhappy? Tell me about it.

Brush: What a nerve! Why, he won't admit a thing is so when you can see it is.

Menaechmus I: By Jupiter and all the gods (Is that enough for you, dear?) I swear I didn't shake my head at him.

Brush: She'll believe you about that. Now get back to business.

Menaechmus I: What business?

Brush: Oh, maybe the embroiderer's. And give back the dress.

Menaechmus I: What dress are you talking about?

Brush: Oh, I give up! He can't even remember his own affairs.

Menaechmus I: [*To Wife.*] Has one of the slaves been cutting up? Are the maids or the menservants answering

back? Tell me. They won't get away with it.

Wife: Nonsense!

Menaechmus I: She's really mad. I don't like this much—

Wife: Nonsense!

Menaechmus I: You must be angry with one of the servants.

Wife: Nonsense!

Menaechmus I: Well, are [illegible] with me, then?

Wife: Now that's not nons[illegible]

Menaechmus I: What the devil! I haven't done anything.

Wife: More nonsense again!

Menaechmus I: Tell me, my dear, what's upsetting you?

Brush: Apple-sauce!

Menaechmus I: Can't you quit bothering me? Do you think I'm talking to you? [*He goes to Wife.*]

Wife. Take away your hand.

Brush: Now you're getting it. Go and eat dinner without me, will you? Then come out drunk, with a wreath on your head, and make fun of me in front of the house, will you?

Menaechmus I: What the devil! I haven't had dinner or set foot in that house today.

Brush: Do you mean to say that?

Menaechmus I: I certainly do.

Brush: This fellow's the worst yet. Didn't I just see you standing here in front of the house with a wreath on? You said I wasn't all there and you didn't know me and you were a foreigner.

Menaechmus I: See here, since I left you, I haven't been home until just now.

Brush: Oh, I know you You didn't think I had any way of getting even with you. All right for you—I've told [illegible]

Wife: As if you didn't know! A dress has been stolen from me out of the house.

Menaechmus I: A dress has been stolen from you?

Wife: Are you asking me?

Menaechmus I: Well, I certainly wouldn't be asking you if I knew.

Brush: Look at the man! What a snake in the grass! You can't hide any[illegible] story. I [illegible] What's the matter?

Wife: Well, since you're not ashamed and won't own up yourself, listen and learn. I'll explain what I'm angry about and what he told me. A dress has been stolen from me out of the house.

Menaechmus I: A dress has been stolen from me?

Brush: [*To Wife.*] See how the fellow's trying to catch you. [*To Menaechmus I.*] It was stolen from her, not from you. Now if it had really been stolen from you—it wouldn't be all right.

Menaechmus I: I'm not dealing with you. [*To Wife.*] What have you got to say, madam?

Wife: A dress, I tell you, is gone from the house.

Menaechmus I: Who stole it?

Wife: I expect the person who stole it knows that.

Menaechmus I: Who is this person?

Wife: Somebody named Menaechmus.

Menaechmus I. It's a dirty trick. But who is this Menaechmus?

Wife: You, I tell you.

Menaechmus I Me?

Wife Yes, you.

Menaechmus I Who says so?

Wife I do

Brush So do I. And you took the [illegible] a friend Erotium

gods (Is that enough for you, my dear?) I swear I didn't give—

Brush: All right, and we swear we're not lying.

Menaechmus I: But I didn't give it to her; I only lent it.

Wife: Maybe you did, but I certainly never lend your dress suit or your overcoat to anybody. It's the wife's business to lend her clothes, and the husband's to lend his. Now go and bring that dress back home.

Menaechmus I: I'll get it back.

Wife: Well, you'd better. You won't get into this house again unless you bring my dress with you. I'm going home.

Brush: What do I get for going to so much trouble for you?

Wife: You'll be repaid when something is stolen from your house. [*She goes inside.*]

Brush: That'll never happen; I haven't got anything at home to lose. Damn the husband and the wife, too! I'll go along downtown. I can see I'm done with this family. [*He departs.*]

Menaechmus I: [*To himself.*] My wife thinks she's punished me by shutting me out—as if I didn't have a better place to go where they'd let me in. If you don't like me, that's your hard luck; Erotium here likes me. She won't shut me out from her; she'll shut me in *with* her. Now I'll go and ask her to give back that dress I gave her this morning. I'll buy her a better one. [*Knocking at Erotium's door.*] Hey, there, where's the doorman? Open the door, somebody, and call Erotium outside.

ACT FOUR. SCENE III

[*Enter Erotium from her house.*]

Erotium: Who is asking for me?

Menaechmus I: More of an enemy to himself than to your tender years.

Erotium: Menaechmus, my love, why are you standing out there? Come on in.

Menaechmus I: In just a minute. Do you know what I've come to see you for?

Erotium: Why, of course: to enjoy yourself with me.

Menaechmus I: No; it's that dress I gave you this morning. Be a good girl and give it back to me. I'll buy you any dress you want, twice as expensive.

Erotium: Why, I just gave it to you to take to the embroiderer's. I gave you the bracelet, you know, too, to take to the jeweler's to be done over.

Menaechmus I: How could you have given me the dress and the bracelet? I gave you the dress just a little while ago and went downtown, and this is the first time I've come back and seen you since then.

Erotium: Oh, I see your game: You're trying to cheat me out of what I let you take.

Menaechmus I: No, no, I'm not asking for the dress to cheat you. I tell you, my wife's found out about it.

Erotium: [*Angrily.*] And I didn't ask you to give it to me in the first place. You brought it to me yourself, and you gave it to me for a present. And now you want it back. All right. Have the old thing. Take it. Wear it yourself, or let your wife wear it, or lock it up in a trunk if you want to. After today you won't set foot inside this house again—don't fool yourself. You trifler with the affections of an innocent woman! Unless you bring me money, you haven't got a chance to see me again. Now go and find some other poor girl you can deceive. [*She goes into her house.*]

Menaechmus I: Say, she's really mad this time. [*Rushing to her door.*] Hey there, wait a minute, I tell you. Come back. Won't you stay? Won't you please come back for my sake? [*To himself.*] She's gone in and closed the door. Now I am the most shut out of men! They won't believe anything I say at home or at my mistress's. I'll go and see what my friends think I'd better do about this. [*He departs in the direction of the forum.*]

ACT FIVE, SCENE I

[*Enter Menaechmus II along the street; he still has the dress.*]

Menaechmus II: [*To himself.*] That was a fool thing I did a while ago, giving Messenio the purse with all my money in it. He's landed himself in a clip-joint somewhere, for sure. [*Enter Wife from her house.*]

Wife: [*To herself.*] I'll just have a look outside; that husband of mine should be back soon. Ah ha, there he is. And he's bringing back the dress. That's just fine.

Menaechmus II: [*To himself.*] I wonder where Messenio can be headed now.

Wife: [*To herself.*] I'll step up and give him the welcome he deserves. [*Aloud.*] You scoundrel, how dare you come into my sight with that dress?

Menaechmus II. Huh? What's the matter, lady, seen a ghost?

Wife. Impudence, how dare you utter one single syllable? How dare you speak to me?

Menaechmus II: Here, what have *I* done? Why shouldn't I?

Wife: You ask me! The cheek, the impudence of the man!

Menaechmus II: I suppose you know why the the Greeks used to call Hecuba the bitch?

Wife: No!

Menaechmus II: Because she acted just like you: she showered abuse on everybody in sight. That's how she got to be called the bitch—and she deserved it, too.

Wife: This is outrageous! I won't stand for it! No husband is worth it. It's outrageous!

Menaechmus II: What's it to me? You can't stand marriage, you're going to leave your husband—what is it, the custom of the country to babble this kind of nonsense to perfect strangers?

Wife: Babble? I won't stand for this a minute longer. I'll get a divorce.

Menaechmus II: Get a divorce. As far as I care, you can stay single till hell freezes over.

Wife: [*Pointing to the dress.*] And a minute ago you denied you stole this from me, and now you dangle it under my very nose. Haven't you any shame?

Menaechmus II: My God, woman, you certainly have an awful nerve. I didn't steal this dress from you. Another woman gave it to me; she wanted me to get it made over for her.

Wife: That settles it! I'm going to send for my father and tell him how outrageously you behave. [*Calls into the house to a slave.*] Decio! Go find my father and bring him here to me. Tell him it's important! [*To Menaechmus II.*] I'll tell him how outrageous you are.

Menaechmus II: Are you insane? What do you mean, outrageous?

Wife: You steal dresses and jewelry from your wife and take them to your mistress! And that's not babbling, either!

Menaechmus II: I wish you'd tell me some good medicine for me to take against that tongue of yours! I don't know who you think I am, but I don't know you from Hercules' wife's grandfather.

Wife: [*Pointing down the street.*] You may make fun of me, but not of *him*—my father! Here he comes. Look at him. Do you know *him?*

Menaechmus II. Oh yes, I remember meeting the two of you the same day I met Methuselah.

Wife. You deny you know me? And my father too?

Menaechmus II. And your grandfather too, if you want to drag him in.

Wife. You're impossible and always were.

ACT FIVE, SCENE II

[*Enter Father.*]

Father. As fast as my age will permit and this business requires, I'm getting along,

But if some of you think that it's easy for me, very briefly I'll prove that you're wrong.
My body's a burden, my nimbleness gone, and of strength I've a notable lack,
I'm quite overgrown with my years—oh, confounded old age is a curse on the back!
Why, if I were to tell all the terrible evils that age, when it comes, brings along,
I'm certain as certain can be that past suitable limits I'd lengthen this song.
However, my mind is a little disturbed at this thing, for it seems a bit queer
That my daughter should suddenly send to my house with directions for me to come here.
And how this affair is related to me, she has not let me know up to now;
But I'm a good guesser, and I'm pretty sure that her husband and she've had a row.
That's what usually happens when men are enslaved by their wives and must come when they call;
And then it's the wives who are mostly to blame, while the husbands aren't guilty at all.

And yet there are bounds, which we all must observe, to the things that a wife can endure,
And a woman won't call in her father unless the offence of her husband is sure.
But I think very soon the suspense will be over, and then I'll know what is the matter—
But look, there's my daughter in front of the door, and her husband; he's not looking at her.

It's just as I suspected. I'll start with her.

Wife: [*To herself.*] I'll go to meet him. [*To father.*] How do you do, father.

Father: How d'ye do, how d'ye do. Now what's this how d'ye do? Why did you send for me? What are you so sad about? Why is he standing off from you angry? The two of you have had a fight. Tell me, which of you is in the wrong? But be brief about it: no long speeches.

Wife: I haven't done anything, not a thing, believe me. But I can't live here, I just can't stand it. Take me away!

Father: Eh, what's this?

Wife: He makes a laughingstock of me.

Father: Who does?

Wife: The man you entrusted me to—my husband!

Father: Tch, tch, tch! A squabble! How many times have I told you not to come to me with your complaints, either of you?

Wife: How can I help it, father?

Father: You ask me that!

Wife: [*Timidly.*] Yes.

Father: I've told you often enough—humour your husband; don't always have your eye on what he's doing, where he's going, what he's up to.

Wife: But he has a mistress, right next door!

Father: Sensible man. And the more you make of it, the more he'll love her. No doubt of it.

Wife: And he drinks there too.

Father: Suppose it's there, suppose it's somewhere else: can you stop him? Confound your impudence! Why not forbid him to go out to dinner, or to have his friends in for a meal? Do you want husbands to be slaves? You might as well give him piecework, and make him sit with the maids and card wool.

Wife: Father, I brought you here to be *my* lawyer, not his; but now you're arguing on his side instead of mine.

Father: If he's been at fault in any way, I'll be much harder on him that I was on you. But he keeps you in clothes and jewelry, and gives you proper food and service, and so you oughtn't to be so fussy about things, my girl.

Wife: But he steals my jewelry and dresses right out of the house! He takes all my nice things and sneaks them off to his mistress!

Father: If he's up to that, he's up to

no good; if he's not up to that, *you're* up to no good; that would be slander.

Wife: But, father, he has the dress this very minute, and the bracelet he took her, too; he's bringing them back because I found out.

Father: I must have his account of it now. I'll speak to him. [*To Menaechmus II.*] Tell me, Menaechmus, what are you two quarreling for? What are you so sad about? Why is she standing off from you angry?

Menaechmus II: [*In legal style.*] Old man, whoever you may be, by highest Jupiter and the gods I swear—

Father: Well sworn. But what?

Menaechmus II: —firstly, that I have done no wrong to this your daughter who accuses me of stealing and purloining from her house this dress—

Wife: Perjury!

Menaechmus II: —and secondly, if I have ever set my foot within the house in which she lives, I pray that I may be the most miserable of miserable men.

Father: That's a fool's prayer, if you deny you ever set foot in the house you live in, you utter madman

Menaechmus II: Old man, do you say I live in that house?

Father: Do you deny it?

Menaechmus II: I deny it and that's the truth.

Father: No, no, you deny it and it's *not* the truth. Unless, of course, you've moved since yesterday. [*To Wife.*] Come here, daughter Tell me, you haven't moved, have you?

Wife: For goodness' sake, what for, and where to?

Father: I don't know

Wife: He's playing games with you. Don't you see?

Father: Menaechmus, that's enough joking Now get down to business

Menaechmus II. [*Hotly.*] What business have we got to get down to? Who are you, anyway? You haven't got anything on me, and neither has that daughter of yours, and besides, she's a first-class pest.

Wife: [*Frightened, to Father.*] Look at [illegible]

scare them away! [*He starts a mad-scene.*]

Wife: See how he stretches and gapes! What shall I do, father?

Father: Come over here, child; keep as far away from him as you can.

Menaechmus II: Hola, hola, Bromius! You call me to the forest, to the hunt? I hear; but I cannot leave this place: I am beset upon the left by this rabid bitch-woman, and behind her is that stinking goat who ruins innocent citizens with perjury.

Father: Woe to your head!

Menaechmus II: Lo! Apollo from his oracle bids me burn her eyes out with flaming torches!

Wife. Help, father! He's threatening to burn my eyes out!

Menaechmus II: [*Aside.*] Ha, they think I'm crazy, but they're the crazy ones.

Father: Psst! Daughter!

Wife: What?

Father: What shall we do? Suppose I get some slaves. Yes, they can grab him and chain him up in the house before he raises any more commotion.

Menaechmus II [*Aside.*] Caught! If I don't work fast, they'll have me carried into the house with them. [*Aloud.*] Yes, Apollo? I must punch her face in with my fists unless she gets the hell out of my sight? I'll do your orders!

Father Run home as fast as you can, or he'll smack you.

Wife [*Retreating to her house.*] Please, father, watch him, don't let him get away! That I should live to hear such language! Poor me! [*She goes into her house.*]

Menaechmus II [*Aside.*] I fixed her all right! Now for the other one [*Aloud.*] Now this dirty wretch, this bearded tremulous Tithonus, this son of Cycnus; you want me to take that staff he has

and beat him to pieces, joint from joint and bone from bone and limb from limb?

Father: [*Retreating.*] If you touch me or come a step closer, there'll be trouble.

Menaechmus II: I'll do your orders: I'll take a double axe and hack this old fellow's guts to mincemeat, down to the very bone.

Father: Then I must beware and take care of myself. The way he threatens me, I'm afraid he will do me harm.

Menaechmus II: New commands, Apollo! Now I am to yoke my wild ungovernable horses and mount my chariot, to trample down this stinking old toothless lion! Now I stand in the chariot; now I have the reins; now the goad is in my hand. Forward, my steeds! Ring out the clatter of your hoofs! Fleet feet, speed swift with tireless tumult!

Father: Threaten me with a chariot!

Menaechmus II: Another charge at him, Apollo, to the death? [*Pretending to have a change of fit.*] But who is this who drags me from the chariot by the hair? O edict of Apollo, thy command is maimed! [*He falls and is still.*]

Father: [*To himself.*] A violent and severe disease! . . .[1] The gods preserve us from the like. See now, how strong he was a moment since, and now is mad with sudden access of disease. I'll go and get a doctor, as fast as I can. [*He departs.*]

Menaechmus II: [*Rising.*] Are they out of sight, I wonder, these people that make me pretend I'm crazy? I'd better get back to the ship while the going is good. [*To the audience.*] Please, all of you, if the old man comes back, don't tell him which way I went. [*He departs. Considerable time is supposed to elapse before the next scene.*]

ACT FIVE. SCENE III

[*Enter Father.*]

Father: I've got pains in my back and pains in my eyes, waiting and watching for the doctor to be free. He didn't want to leave his patients; I had a hard time persuading him to come. He says he set a broken leg for Aesculapius and a broken arm for Apollo.[1] Have I got a doctor, I wonder, or a joiner? Here he comes now. Get along, you ant!

ACT FIVE. SCENE IV

[*Enter the Doctor.*]

Doctor: Tell me, sir, what did you say was his disease? Has he hallucinations, or madness? Pray inform me. Has he the lethargy, or the subcutaneous humours?

Father: That's what I brought you here for: to tell me what's wrong with him, and cure him.

Doctor: Ah, that is quite simple. He shall be cured, I promise you.

Father: I want a careful treatment for him; spare no pains.

Doctor: No pains shall be spared; why, I will spend at least six hundred sighs a day on it.

Father: [*Seeing Menaechmus I approaching.*] Here he comes himself. Let's watch him.

ACT FIVE. SCENE V

[*Enter Menaechmus I, not seeing the others.*]

Menaechmus I: [*To himself.*] What a day! Everything going wrong, and getting me in wrong! I thought I was getting away with something; but that parasite of mine has let it all out and made a quaking criminal of me—the smart alec, biting the hand that feeds him. Sure as I live, it'll cost him his life. I'm a fool to call it *his* life though; it's mine: he lives on me and what I feed him. Well then, I'll cut his greedy throat. My mistress was just as bad; these girls are all alike. When I asked for

[1] There is a short lacuna in the text here.

[1] This is all the more amusing, since both Aesculapius and Apollo were gods of healing.

the dress so I could take it back to my wife, she pretended she'd given it to me already. Ugh! I certainly lead a miserable life!

Father: [*To Doctor.*] Can you hear what he's saying?

Doctor: He says he is miserable.

Father: Go on up to him.

Doctor: [*Complying.*] Good afternoon, Menaechmus. Tch, tch, why do you leave your arm uncovered like that? Don't you know how bad that is for a man in your condition?

Menaechmus I: Go hang yourself! [*The Doctor retreats.*]

Father: Notice anything?

Doctor: Notice anything! This case will take an *acre* of hellebore,[1] at least! [*Returning to Menaechmus I.*] Now, Menaechmus—

Menaechmus I. Well?

Doctor: Just a few questions, please. Do you drink red wine or white wine?

Menaechmus I: Why not ask about the bread I eat, if it's purple, pink, or scarlet? Or whether I eat scaly birds and feathered fish?

Father: My goodness, hear the way he raves! Hurry up and give him some medicine before he goes completely crazy.

Doctor: Just a minute, I want to finish my questions.

Father: You talk a man to death.

Doctor: [*To Menaechmus I.*] Tell me, are you ever troubled with a hardening of the eyes?

Menaechmus I: What, you idiot! Do you take me for a lobster?

Doctor: Tell me this: are you subject to rumbling of the bowels—as far as you know?

Menaechmus I: After a good meal, no, but if I'm hungry, then they do.

Doctor: [*Aside.*] Nothing crazy in that answer. [*To Menaechmus I.*] Do you sleep soundly all night? Do you fall asleep readily on retiring?

Menaechmus I: I sleep like a log—if I've paid my bills! [*Losing his temper.*] Oh, the devil take you and all your questions!

Doctor: [*To Father.*] The madness is beginning. You hear the way he talks; be careful.

Father: Why he's talking like a perfect Nestor now, compared to the way he was a little while ago. Just a few minutes ago he called his wife a rabid bitch.

Menaechmus I: I said *what?*

Father: You were raving, I say.

Menaechmus I: *I* was raving?

Father: Yes, *you*. And you threatened to run over me with a chariot. I saw you, I accuse you.

Menaechmus I: [*Furious.*] And you stole a wreath out of the temple of Jupiter, I know, and you were thrown into jail for it, I know, and after you [illegible] slavery, I know. Right back at you with your dirty insults! I'm sane enough for that, all right

Father: For God's sake, doctor, hurry! Whatever you're going to do, do it. [illegible]

Father: You think so?

Doctor: Definitely. Then I'll have a free hand with his treatment.

Father: Just as you like.

Doctor: [*Gloatingly, to Menaechmus I.*] I'll have you drinking hellebore for something like three weeks!

Menaechmus I. [*Savagely.*] And I'll have you strung up and jabbed with ox-goads for a month!

Doctor: [*To Father.*] Get some men to bring him there.

Father: How many?

Doctor: Judging by the extent of his madness, four, no less.

Father: They'll be right here. [*Starts to go.*] Watch him, doctor

Doctor: [*Hurriedly.*] No, no, I must go back and get things ready. Tell the slaves to bring him to me

[1] Hellebore was used by the ancients as a remedy for insanity.

Father: I'll have him there right away.

Doctor: I'm on my way. [*The Doctor hurries down the street.*]

Father: Good-bye. [*The Father departs.*]

Menaechmus I: [*To himself.*] Father-in-law gone, doctor gone; now I'm alone. Good God, why do these people say I'm crazy? All my life I've never had a day's illness; I don't lose my head and pick fights, or law-suits either. I lead a normal life with normal people; I recognise my friends, and talk to them. Must be that *they're* crazy, the ones that say I am. What do I do now? I want to go home, but my wife won't have it. And I can't get in here. [*He points to the house of Erotium.*] A nice situation! I'll be stuck here forever! Well, maybe I'll get in at home by nightfall.

ACT FIVE. SCENE VI

[*Enter Messenio.*]

Messenio: [*To himself, not seeing Menaechmus I.*]

It's a proof of an excellent slave,
If, his master's belongings to save,
  He'll use as much care
  When his master's not there
As when master is watching the slave.

For his back and his shins he must fear,
The demands of his stomach not hear,
  And the punishment know
  Of the slothful and slow—
This servant whose conscience is clear.

There are beatings, and chains, and the mills,
Hunger, weariness, terrible chills—
  The reward of the lazy;
  But since I'm not crazy
I'm good, and avoid all these ills.

I can stand a tongue-lashing, but I don't like a whip-lashing; and I'd rather eat the meal than turn the mill. So I obey my master; it's worth my while. Others can take the easy way if they want to; I'll take the hard way. I'll keep out of trouble by worrying about being on the spot wherever my master needs me. Slaves who worry while they're *out* of trouble are the ones that serve their masters best: because the ones who don't worry then still have plenty to worry about when they're *in* trouble, but then the harm's done. But I don't have to worry much—my master will reward me before long. Beware of a beating, that's my motto. I've left the baggage and the slaves at an inn as he ordered, and now I'm back to meet him. I'll knock and let him know I'm here, in hopes I'm in time to get him safely out of this pirate lair. But I'm afraid the fight may be over already. [*He goes toward Erotium's door.*]

ACT FIVE. SCENE VII

[*Enter Father with Slaves. Messenio withdraws to one side.*]

Father: [*To slaves.*] Now by all that's holy, don't bungle your orders. I repeat: pick that man up and carry him to the doctor's, or your shanks and sides will smart for it. Pay no attention to his threats. Why do you stand there? What are you waiting for? You should have had him up and off already. I'm going to the doctor's; I'll be there when you come. [*He departs.*]

Menaechmus I: [*Finding himself surrounded.*] Good lord, what's going on here? Why are these men making for me? What do you want? What are you after? Why are you surrounding me? Why are you grabbing me? Where are you taking me? Murder! Help! Good folk of Epidamnus, help! Let me go!

Messenio: Great heaven, what is this I see? A gang of strangers carrying off my master! Shame!

Menaechmus I: Doesn't anybody dare help me?

Messenio: I do master, I dare most daringly! [*To the audience.*]

Oh! What an outrageous crime I see!
Epidamnians, this man was free,
My master, when he came today:

. . . .

Menaechmus I: I implore you, stranger, help me! Make them stop this criminal outrage!

Messenio. You bet I will! I'll be your helper, your defender, your ally! I won't let them murder you; better me than you. That one who has you by the shoulder, gouge out his eye. I'll garden up these fellows' faces and plant my fists there [*General scuffle.*] Try to kidnap him, would you? This is what you get for it! Hands off him!

Menaechmus I: I've got him by the eye.

Messenio· Gouge it out! [*To Slaves.*] Villains! Robbers! Bandits!

Slaves: Murder! Stop, for God's sake!

Messenio: Then let go of him! [*The Slaves drop Menaechmus I.*]

Menaechmus I: Take your hands off me! [*To Messenio.*] Keep on hoeing with those fists.

Messenio· Go, beat it! Get the devil out of here! Here's a prize for *you*, for being the last to go! [*The Slaves run off.*] I mapped out those faces pretty well, I think! Well, master, I got here just in time, didn't I?

Menaechmus I: May heaven reward you, young man. If it hadn't been for you, I'd never have lived to see the sun go down today.

Messenio: Well then, if you did the right thing, you'd set me free

Menaechmus I: I'd set you free?

Messenio: Yes, master, because I saved your life.

Menaechmus I: What is this? Young man, you are mistaken.

Messenio: What do you mean?

Menaechmus I: By father Jupiter, I swear I am not your master.

Messenio· You're joking!

Menaechmus I: No, I mean it. And no slave of mine ever served me as well as you have.

Messenio: Then if you say I don't belong to you, let me go free.

Menaechmus I: So far as I am concerned, I declare you free to go anywhere you want.

Messenio: My Patron! "Congratulations on your freedom, Messenio" "Thank you" But please, Patron, I'm still at your service just as much as when I was your slave. I'll live with you and go with you when you go back home.

Menaechmus I: [*To himself.*] I guess not!

Messenio: I'll go to the inn now and get your baggage and the money. The purse and the passage-money are sealed up safely in your bag I'll have it all here right away.

Menaechmus I: Do, by all means.

Messenio: I'll give it back to you all safe, just as you gave it to me. Wait for me here. [*He departs.*]

Menaechmus I: [*To himself.*] A lot of strange things have certainly been happening to me today in strange ways. People denying that I am I, and locking me out of the house; and then this fellow saying he was my slave, and I set him free; and now he says he'll bring me a bag of money. If he does, I'll tell him he's free to go wherever he wants, so that when he comes to his senses he won't try to get the money back. And my father-in-law and the doctor saying I was insane! Heavens knows what it all means; it all seems like a dream —Well, I'll try at Erotium's again. I suppose she's still angry at me, but I've got to try to get that dress and take it home. [*He goes into the house of Erotium*]

ACT FIVE SCENE VIII

[*Enter Menaechmus II with Messenio*]

Menaechmus II You brazen rascal, you dare tell me you've seen me anywhere today since I told you to come here?

Messenio Why, I rescued you just a

few minutes ago, when four men were carrying you off bodily, right in front of this very house. You were yelling for help to all heaven and earth, and I ran up and rescued you with my fists, in spite of them. And you set me free, because I saved your life. I said I'd get the money and the luggage, and then you doubled round the block so you could meet me and deny the whole thing!

Menaechmus II: I set you free?

Messenio: You did.

Menaechmus II: I'd turn slave myself sooner than free you. And that's that!

ACT FIVE. SCENE IX

[*Enter Menaechmus I from the house of Erotium.*]

Menaechmus I: [*To those within.*] Swear by your eyes if you want to, but you did *not* give me the dress or the bracelet either, you trollops!

Messenio: Immortal gods, what's this I see!

Menaechmus II: What do you see?

Messenio: Your mirror!

Menaechmus II: What's this?

Messenio: He's the very image of you, as like as can be.

Menaechmus II: Well! He's certainly not unlike me, now that I take stock of myself.

Menaechmus I: [*Catching sight of Messenio.*] Oh, the young man who saved my life. How are you?

Messenio: Please sir, if you don't mind, tell me what your name is, for goodness' sake!

Menaechmus I: Indeed I don't mind, after what you did for me. My name is Menaechmus.

Menaechmus II: No, that's *my* name.

Menaechmus I: I am a Sicilian, from Syracuse.

Menaechmus II: That's where *I* come from.

Menaechmus I: What's that?

Menaechmus II: That's the truth.

Messenio: [*Pointing to the wrong man, Menaechmus I.*] This is the man I know, of course, this is my master. I'm his slave, but I thought I was that other man's. [*To Menaechmus I.*] I thought he was you, and bothered him. [*To Menaechmus II.*] Please excuse me if I said anything foolish without realising it.

Menaechmus II: You must be crazy. Don't you remember leaving the ship with me today?

Messenio: [*To Menaechmus II.*] You are right. *You* are my master. [*To Menaechmus I.*] *You* must look for another slave. [*To Menaechmus II.*] Greeting to you. [*To Menaechmus I.*] Goodbye to you. [*Pointing to Menaechmus II.*] I say *this* man is Menaechmus.

Menaechmus I: But I say *I* am.

Menaechmus II: What is this nonsense? *You* Menaechmus?

Menaechmus I: Yes; Menaechmus, son of Moschus.

Menaechmus II: The son of my father?

Menaechmus I: No, sir, mine, not yours. You may have your father; I don't want to deprive you of him.

Messenio: [*To himself.*] Immortal gods, fulfil this unhoped-for hope! Unless my mind has failed me, these are the two twin brothers! Both of them claim the same father and country. I'll tell my master about it first. [*Aloud.*] Menaechmus!

Menaechmus I and II: [*Together.*] What is it?

Messenio: I don't want both of you; just the one that came with me on the boat.

Menaechmus I: I didn't.

Menaechmus II: I did.

Messenio: Then it's you I want. [*Drawing him to one side.*] Come over here.

Menaechmus II: Well, what is it?

Messenio: That man is either a swindler or your twin brother! I never saw two men look so much alike. You're as hard to tell apart as two drops of water or two drops of milk. And besides, he claims the same father and the same

country. We'd better ask him about this.

Menaechmus II: That's good advice [illegible]

[illegible] free man.

Messenio: That's what I hope.

Menaechmus II: I hope so too.

Messenio: [*To Menaechmus I.*] You, sir: you said your name was Menaechmus, I believe.

Menaechmus I. Yes, it is.

Messenio: His name is Menaechmus too. You said you were born at Syracuse in Sicily; that's where he was born. Moschus was your father, you said; his too Now both of you can help me, and help yourselves too

Menaechmus I. I am in your debt; ask me whatever you want, and you shall have it. I'm at your service, just as if you had bought and paid for me

Messenio: I hope to prove that you two are twin brothers, born on the same day to the same father and mother!

Menaechmus I: Amazing! I certainly wish you could prove that.

Messenio: I can. But come now, both of you, answer my questions.

[illegible]

Menaechmus I: It is

Messenio: And yours too?

Menaechmus II: Yes.

Messenio: You say you are the son of Moschus?

Menaechmus I: Quite so.

Menaechmus II: So am I.

Messenio: You are from Syracuse?

Menaechmus I: Yes

Messenio: And you?

Menaechmus II: Of course.

Messenio: It checks very well so far. Now to proceed: what is the earliest thing you can remember of your life in Sicily?

[illegible] to [illegible] getting separated from him in the crowd, and being brought here.

Menaechmus II: God save us!

Messenio: [*To Menaechmus II.*] What are you shouting for? Be quiet. [*To Menaechmus I.*] How old were you when you went on this trip with your father?

Menaechmus I: Seven: I was just beginning to lose my teeth. I never saw my father again.

Messenio. Now then: how many sons did your father have at this time?

Menaechmus I: To the best of my recollection, two.

Messenio: Which was the older, you or the other one?

Menaechmus I: Both the same age.

Messenio: How is that possible?

Menaechmus I: We were twins.

Menaechmus II: Thank God!

Messenio: [*To Menaechmus II.*] If you interrupt, I'll stop

Menaechmus II: No, no, I'll be quiet.

Messenio. [*To Menaechmus I.*] Tell me, did you both have the same name?

Menaechmus I: Oh, no I was the one who was called Menaechmus then, as I still am. His name was Sosicles.

Menaechmus II: That's proof enough! No more delay! O my own twin brother, come to my arms! I am Sosicles!

Menaechmus I: [*Doubting.*] Then how does it come you're named Menaechmus?

Menaechmus II. After we got the news that you were lost . . . [1] and that our father was dead, our grandfather changed my name and gave me yours

Menaechmus I. I believe you But one more question.

Menaechmus II. Ask it.

Menaechmus I: What was the name of our mother?

Menaechmus II Teuximarcha

Menaechmus I. [*Convinced.*] Exactly so! Oh, welcome, beyond all hope, after all these years!

Menaechmus II Welcome, dear brother! Sought with such misery and toil, and found with joy at last! [*They embrace.*]

[1] There is a [illegible]

Messenio: [*To Menaechmus II.*] So that's why the woman here called you by name! She took you for him, and asked you to dinner.

Menaechmus I: Yes, I told her to have a dinner for me there today (putting one over on my wife), and I gave her a dress that I'd stolen from my wife too.

Menaechmus II: [*Producing the dress.*] Do you mean this dress?

Menaechmus I: That's the one! How did you get it?

Menaechmus II: The woman dragged me in to dinner and said the dress was mine, I'd given it to her. So after some excellent wine, women, and song, I took it away with me, and a gold bracelet too.

Menaechmus I: She thought she was getting *me* in, of course. But I'm certainly glad I got you fixed up so well.

Messenio: I suppose you're still willing to set me free as you promised?

Menaechmus I: A very good and fair request, brother; grant it for my sake.

Menaechmus II: [*Complying, with the correct legal formula.*] I declare you free.

Menaechmus I: Congratulations on your freedom, Messenio.

Messenio: I hope it lasts better this time.

Menaechmus II: Well, brother, now that everything has turned out the way we wanted, let's both go back to Syracuse.

Menaechmus I: Agreed! I'll have an auction and sell all my Epidamnus property. In the meantime, brother, won't you come in?

Menaechmus II: Good. [*They move towards the house of Menaechmus I.*]

Messenio: Do me a favour!

Menaechmus I: What is it?

Messenio: Give me the job of auctioneer.

Menaechmus I: You shall have it.

Messenio: You want the auction cried at once?

Menaechmus I: Yes, for a week from today. [*The brothers go into the house.*]

Messenio:

EXTRAORDINARY AUC—TION
WEEK FROM TODAY
MENAECHMUS SELLS HIS PROPERTY
CASH AND NO DELAY
ALL MUST GO—HOUSE AND LOT
SLAVES AND FURNITURE
WIFE GOES TOO IF ANY ONE
TAKES A FANCY TO HER

He'll be lucky if he gets a quarter of a million for the whole lot. [*To the audience.*] And now, spectators, fare ye well, and lustily applaud us all.

NOTES ON *THE TWIN MENAECHMI*

Since Plautus's play is, like Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a "comedy," we naturally think first of all of the differences between the two. In both plays we have witty remarks, characters in difficult and embarrassing situations, domestic difficulties, and a "happy ending." But at the same time it is obvious that, despite his use of the comic mode, there is a wide difference between the two plays and that Wilde has vastly more serious intentions than Plautus. What we can observe at the outset, therefore, is that even some similarity in materials and method does not mean similarity of plays; we can learn the important fact that the author's attitude to his materials is what ultimately gives any play its distinctive character. What is the difference between Wilde's attitude and Plautus's will appear in the course of the discussion of *The Menaechmi*.

At the same time, it may be very helpful to make some comparison between *The Menaechmi* and *Everyman*, since both are relatively simple and

even primitive plays. But the very dissimilarity between them should be enlightening.

Everyman is primarily concerned with an *idea* and subordinates plot and character to that: *The Twin Menaechmi* deals entirely in *amusing situations*, is little concerned with character, and not at all with ideas. Thus each play makes only a partial use of all the means available to drama. Ironically, however, *Everyman* looks very simple but turns out to have some complexity in its method, whereas Plautus's play, which looks very confused and complicated, is at bottom a quite simple thing.

1. THE NATURE OF FARCE

The Twin Menaechmi is as we have said an example of farce, a simple comic type always popular. When we say that it is concerned only with "amusing situations," what do we mean? Precisely what makes it farce?

1. The whole action springs from the mistaking of identical twins—clearly an "external" and a trivial situation. Since the plot demands that the twins be completely alike, not only in superficial appearance but also in character and personality, the whole problem of characterization is avoided. Plautus prefers the amusing confusions which he can get from the total identification of one twin with the other to the psychological problems which might be derived from other characters' perceiving the underlying differences between two people who happen to look alike. Thus, he does the simplest thing possible.

2. Note what Plautus does with the central dramatic problem of focusing, the problem of keeping some main theme, character, or characters in the foreground. We speak of a play's belonging to a character ("Hamlet's play," "Lady Windermere's play"), but *The Menaechmi* belongs to nobody. Our attention is focused mainly on the state of confusion into which all the characters fall. In other words, there is no main "conflict" but rather a series of minor differences. We see each person for only a short time, in flashes, not in a continuous action which, because it reveals the character and by revealing the character, becomes significant. The student will come to see, by the way, that one way to measure the relative maturity of various plays is to notice the degree to which the author of each play has succeeded in avoiding a scrambled and diffuse effect by a subordination of the characters which leaves the main action centered in one character alone. *The Menaechmi*, measured by this standard, lacks focus as compared with *Lady Windermere's Fan*, where, in spite of a larger number of characters, there is much better subordination to a central character. *Everyman*, whatever its deficiencies, also does excellently in relating everything to its central characters.

3. In *The Menaechmi*, the characters (since they are not very fully developed for us) cannot determine or influence the course of events: the action of the play progresses not because of what the characters *do*, but because of what *happens to* the characters. The characters themselves are

passive. To call attention to this fact is not, of course, to demand that every play must show man as the "master of his fate." Doubtless most of us, whether in drama or in life, are only to a degree masters of our fate. But in any significant drama, the characters must show some signs of struggle or else seem rather uninteresting. Even at the level of comedy, we expect men to use their wills, to attempt to use their intelligence, instead of merely getting knocked about by events toward which they can exhibit only a bewildered surprise. *Everyman*, as we have already observed, is a rather primitive play without very full character development. In it one might expect that the character Everyman, suddenly called by Death, would have to be regarded as the victim of an outer force. Yet even in this play, the drama hinges, not upon what fate does to Everyman, but on Everyman's efforts to cope with fate—to meet it satisfactorily. Everyman is not a merely passive character.

4. Thus, we may observe, the situations in farce do not *mean* anything: confusion and embarrassment are exhibited for their own sake. A character suffers embarrassment, not primarily because of what he is or does, but because his embarrassment is supposed to be amusing in itself. When Everyman, on the other hand, is upset by the summons of Death, his shocked surprise is not meant to be embarrassing in itself: it is dramatically effective because it represents the typical response of human beings to completely unforeseen predicaments. In *Lady Windermere's Fan* the conflict between Mrs. Erlynne and Lady Windermere is *symbolic* in the sense that it embodies a vast conflict between conventional society and an unconventional individual; it is meaningful because it involves much more than the single case. But a conflict between either Menaechmus and Erotium means merely that one Menaechmus has been mistaken for the other. That is all: there is no suggested or secondary value. The thing tends to be one-dimensional.

5. In fact, all farce is by its own nature one-dimensional. It exploits situations. Now when situations devoid of content demand our attention, how do they get it? By their variety, novelty, uniqueness—by being "different." Plautus's play depends on an extraordinary set of circumstances: identical twins who do not know each other are brought into proximity. We have to have the disappearance of a child, the hunt for him, the remarkable discovery of the needle in the haystack. The author trades in the rare, the unusual, the improbable.

He has to. If he started working in terms of character, he would be dealing in recognizable patterns of conduct, and the play would begin to veer from the unique to the universal. Aristotle insisted on the need of the "probable" in drama, that is, fidelity to human patterns as we understand them; the playwright, he said, should be concerned with what *may* happen. This is the universal. When an author decides to write farce and thus rules out the possibility of concentrating, by the treatment of character, wide ranges of human experience into the actions of an individual, he automatically commits himself to the novel, the untypical.

To return to comparison. *Everyman*, unlike *The Menaechmi*, deals with the universal—the human being's facing of death and consequent re-examination of his values. This does not inevitably make the play great, for *Everyman* has obvious faults—for instance, lack of sufficient individualization. Merely to introduce the universal is not enough; what is finally important is the author's method, the form which his conception takes. And here we [illegible]

Any farce (and *T* [illegible] mentally off-center. [illegible] the opposite method, dealing with the central, as in *Everyman*, is not of itself enough. The conclusion to be drawn from this comparison—and it may seem paradoxical at first glance—is this: a work of finest quality must [illegible] work, says [illegible] ts must be [illegible] t the unexpectedness of farce, for we do have expectation in good literary work (see *Motivation* in the Glossary); it is the "gripping" quality of a new but profound revelation. *The theme of widest applicability and significance must* be embodied in a unique form with sharply defined characters and situation which entirely escape triteness; its quality is evinced in its coming across to us with a fine sense of freshness, even of uniqueness There is a *combination of novelty and expectation.* An excellent theme, of course, may be treated so dully and stodgily as to be less successful than an unpretentious but lively farce. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* embodies a great theme and succeeds in turning it into powerful drama. The situation in *Hamlet* is certainly as unusual as that of *The Menaechmi*, but on the other hand, whereas Menaechmus speaks only for himself, Hamlet is a sort of Everyman, painfully gaining insight into a complex world of good and evil.

The student, at this point, may be inclined to say: "Well, when Menaechmus is mistreated or confused, he becomes angry, and surely that is universal enough." To a degree, of course, this is true. For the figures of even the simplest farce must be, in some sense, universally human in their actions and responses. The characters could not be recognizably human unless they represented in some faint degree at least the basic patterns of human behavior. Literally, we overstate the case a little, perhaps, when we say that farce is absolutely one-dimensional. But the relative lack of another dimension in farce becomes clear enough when we realize that the actions of Menaechmus (either I or II—it does not matter) lack any but the thinnest relevance to universal human nature. *Menaechmus is not developing* nor is he learning anything. He responds to a stimulus, only—one is tempted to say—automatically, like an eyelid that closes when something is waved in front of the eye The response reveals nothing. Nothing is implied. *There is no symbolic situation.*

Thus, in spite of the fact that farce makes use of uncommon materials, farce is really *commonplace*. Serious drama is concerned with the common, but serious drama wins its title to seriousness, and when successful, to

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Any farce (and *The Menaechmi* is a good example) fails, by being fundamentally off-center, to challenge greatness or even seriousness. Of course, the opposite method, dealing with the central, as in *Everyman*, is not of itself enough. The conclusion to be drawn from this comparison—and it may seem paradoxical at first glance—is this: a work of finest quality must be universal and individual at the same time. In a good author's work, says Samuel Johnson, "familiar things are made new," and events must be "surprising, and yet natural." The "surprising," however, is not the unexpectedness of farce, for we do have expectation in good literary work (see *Motivation* in the Glossary); it is the "gripping" quality of a new but profound revelation. The theme of widest applicability and significance must be embodied in a unique form with sharply defined characters and situation which entirely escape triteness; its quality is evinced in its coming across to us with a fine sense of freshness, even of uniqueness There is a combination of novelty and expectation An excellent theme, of course, may be treated so dully and stodgily as to be less successful than an unpretentious but lively farce. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* embodies a great theme and succeeds in turning it into powerful drama. The situation in *Hamlet* is certainly as unusual as that of *The Menaechmi;* but on the other hand, whereas Menaechmus speaks only for himself, Hamlet is a sort of Everyman, painfully gaining insight into a complex world of good and evil

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Thus, in spite of the fact that farce makes use of uncommon materials, farce is really *commonplace*. Serious drama is concerned with the common, but serious drama wins its title to seriousness, and when successful, to

greatness, by avoiding, through its sharpness of insight and through its individuality of presentation, the commonplace.

6. The student should also note, as another aspect of the mechanical response which the characters of Plautus make to the situation, that they seem never to reason about what happens; they never use their heads. Like so many automatons, they register wonderment, anger, surprise, disgust, and so on, but they never make rational, adult inquiries. In Act III. ii, Menaechmus II accepts easily one incredible event after another; and the author does not even attempt to exploit, as a possible explanation of his credulity, the fact that he is too drunk to realize fully what is going on.

In general, the characters in farce tend to be abnormally insensitive to clues (cf. mystery melodramas, where one finds abnormal sensitiveness and abnormal insensitiveness side by side). This lack of normal inquisitiveness is an aspect of the rather sketchy characterization which the author has accorded them. If the characters in a typical farce did reason about events, the action of the farce would quickly come to an end. Thus, we may say that in farce the author must depend upon unalert, commonplace people in order to maintain his unusual situations.

2. THE QUALITY OF PLAUTUS'S FARCE

Yet, granted the limitations which inhere in the very nature of farce, how well has Plautus done within these limitations? How has he secured enough liveliness and tension—if he has in fact secured them—to keep his audience interested?

Since the very nature of farce precludes any significant study of character, that ordinarily rich source of interest is out of the question. As a substitute for it, and, indeed, in order to distract his audience from the lack of it, Plautus, in general, has attempted to play up the qualities of gusto, high animal spirits, and the sense of rapid movement. The incidents are exploited for their own sake with a boisterous and earthy humor, and we are hurried on to another surprising situation before the first situation has had time to pall on us or we have had time to raise embarrassing questions as to its general plausibility. One must remember too, that the liveliness and the successfulness of farce depend also on the ability of the comic actor to develop the humor fully with his facial expression, mimicry, and gesture. By such devices, as we know, an able comedian can frequently make very funny a part which in itself may seem rather wooden and flat. We may be sure that Plautus knew what he was doing, and that some of the rather obvious humor of the text was given point and meaning by the more able comic actors of the period, even as some such farce roles in the moving pictures are occasionally given point and meaning by the witty and talented comedian of today. But though the dramatist has a perfect right to depend upon the actor who has such devices at his command, it ought to be clear that his comedy, in so far as it does depend upon such devices, is moving away from drama proper and into the realm of pan-

tomime, vaudeville, and musical comedy. It is with drama proper that this book is concerned. It is fair, therefore, to consider *The Menaechmi* with a full sense of its limitations as a drama, though this is not to forget that the other forms, such as pantomime, are worth having and may in their own right be thoroughly amusing.

Conventions. We have already remarked upon the need in this play to distract the audience from types of questions which ordinarily would arise with disastrous effect. But there are other problems—among them the problem of keeping a rather complicated plot moving smoothly without too much confusion in the minds of the audience. Here, by the way, Plautus' problem is greatly simplified by certain conventions of the Roman stage (see the section on *Conventions* in the Glossary). The stage regularly represented a street on which the houses of the principals could be represented as close together and where everyone could meet everyone else; thus, the whole logic of place was settled in advance, and the author had no problem such as those which arise for Wilde in Act III of *Lady Windermere's Fan.*

Exposition, too, was managed largely by conventional devices—the use of prologue; a character's introducing himself to the audience (I. i, I. ii, III. i, and IV. ii), asides (I. ii, I. iii ff). Even when Plautus does use dialogue for exposition as in Act II. ii, he simply has the character give the desired information without bothering much about the dramatic logic involved. Since convention permitted characters not to see or hear other characters present on the stage, the usual problem of getting the stage free for necessary conversations is in this play perceptibly lessened; and since it was understood that one of the stage-exits led to the harbor, the other "downtown," the disposal of characters off-stage was pretty well predetermined.

In fairness to Plautus, the student should know and take into account the theatrical conventions which obtained in his day. Yet the student should also observe, in passing, that the greater the allowance which we have to make for theatrical conventions, the greater is our sense of the author's limitations While some such allowances always have to be made, *the fact is that one measure of artistic excellence is the ability of the artist to rise above the limitations of his own time and place, or else his ability to work through them to effects which transcend the mere fashions of his era.* Plautus, in order to be acceptable to us, for example, demands a greater knowledge of his theater than do Sophocles and Shakespeare.

Yet, though his reliance on certain conventions is a measure of his relative weakness as a dramatist, the conventions, once apprehended, do give him a great freedom: *he can devote nearly all his attention to securing the movement, liveliness, and variety that make for good farce, in which he is not unsuccessful.* Note the following aspects of his method:

Variety. Plautus is careful to avoid monotony; he constantly shifts the characters on the stage, employing the introduction of the new character to give a new twist to the situation. If one runs through Acts I, II, and III, he will see how each new scene adds some novelty designed to main-

tain the curiosity of the audience. Note too that Plautus makes still greater use of variety later on—shifting from Menaechmus II to Menaechmus I, getting the latter into trouble with both his wife and Erotium, and then rapidly bringing in the father, the doctor, the insanity motif, the attempted arrest, the rescue by Messenio, and the issue of Messenio's emancipation. Plautus has no lack of inventiveness; but his method is to develop his situations, not by concentration, but by pursuing as many ramifications as possible. Note that in neither *Everyman* nor in *Lady Windermere's Fan* do we find mere variety for variety's sake; in *Everyman*, for example, the author uses variety as a means of making more effective what he has to say.

Climactic Arrangement. Plautus skillfully begins with a relatively mild confusion, that between Menaechmus II and Cylindrus in Act II, ii. In this case the mistake in identity is of very little consequence, and without too much strain it introduces the reader to the dominant theme of confusion. The next mistake in identity, however, that made by Erotium (II, iii), has more serious repercussions: and the confusion which involves Menaechmus II and Brush is more serious still; for, in his anger at what he regards as a slight, Brush brings in the wife of Menaechmus I. Indeed, relations become more and more confused until finally everybody is embroiled.

In connection with the crescendo of confusions, and as a factor which in itself contributes to the effect of crescendo, one should note that in Acts IV and V, the rapid shift of character and situation, plus the intensification of the feelings of the characters and their consequent tendency to express themselves more sharply and forcefully, gives an impression of much quicker movement than in the comparatively leisurely first part of the play. This change is called a change in "tempo" or an "increase in tempo," and it is obviously a factor which contributes to the total effect of the play. (See the section on *Tempo* in the Glossary.) Tempo can be heightened, too, by sudden decisions—impulsive leaps into action which can easily occur in a type of action which is not much concerned with motivation. As an example, notice the suddenness with which Menaechmus II (V, ii) decides to feign madness.

Language. As the excellent translation of this play makes clear, the characters of Plautus use a rapid-fire, colloquial, slangy speech suited to farce. Their speech is racy and even violent; farce depends, one remembers, on strong feelings, not thoughtfulness. Their wit takes the form of puns and word-play (*pick-ups* and *stick-ups*, Act II. iii; *Cylinder*, *Colander*, Act II. ii), which, because they depend on resemblances in sound rather than on double meaning, have the triviality appropriate to farce. Compare this wit with the kind found in the plays of Sheridan and Wilde.

Probability. Because of his plot Plautus has the difficult problem of keeping his audience from thinking, "I don't believe it." He is not dealing with character; hence he must achieve probability without using the best source of the probable.

First of all, he knows that the confusion of identity cannot last very long; so he represents it as lasting but a short time. In fact, the play comes very close to having the ideal "unity of time" which Renaissance critics called for—identity of the time of performance with the time of the actions represented.

Second, Plautus knows that *he must make us accept the characters'* initial failure to sense, or suspect, or do anything about the situation, and their subsequent acquiescence in incredible situation after incredible situation without any intelligent, mature effort to do something about it. If he can secure our assent at the start, his biggest battle is won; for, if we accept the situation as the author first presents it, we are, as it were, committed to it, and we tend to go along without undue questioning. So, as Plautus recognizes, II ii and II iii are crucial for the play, and the problem they present to the author is extremely difficult, for the author is faced with this dilemma. if Menaechmus really uses his head, there will be no plot. if he does not use his head at all, the situation will be wholly incredible.

Plautus gets out of the dilemma by having Menaechmus use his head, but use it *to make the wrong inference.* Menaechmus believes that he is the victim of a "racket." To strengthen this bid for our acceptance, Plautus spends most of Act II stressing the evil reputation of Epidamnus The character of the city is skillfully built up *before* there has been any confusion, so that Messenio's speech "Didn't I tell you there were a lot of swindlers here?" (II. ii) comes in logically, not as a clumsy after-thought. Besides, this comment is made very early in the scene so as to set Menaechmus's mind working immediately in the wrong direction .

(Has Plautus tried hard enough to convince us of Menaechmus's error? Should Messenio have a greater part in the scene? Why is Menaechmus surprised when Erotium addresses him in II iii? Should he be presented as thinking that she is a part of the "racket"? Would this view justify his unquestioningly spending considerable time with her?)

Third, Plautus obviously must keep the brothers apart until the end of the play, and he must make us feel that their failure to run into each other is logical, is not merely the result of his own manipulation Otherwise, we shall be the less willing to accept the play Plautus has a good start here in that the speed and bustle and confusion of farce tend to distract our attention from weak connections and unsatisfactory causations. In a room full of noise and activity one is not likely to notice things that in calm and order would be easily apparent Indeed, in farce (and melodrama) what we call motivation is generally subordinate to the quest for action, excitement, surprise, etc.

In stage terms, keeping the brothers apart is a matter of exits and entrances, and our problem, then, is to see how logical these are, how well motivated. The student might make a careful check of entrances and exits, to see whether on examination the brothers' movements are reasonably *accounted for. Consider especially such a matter as* Menaechmus I's not

tain the curiosity of the audience. Note too that Plautus makes still greater use of variety later on—shifting from Menaechmus II to Menaechmus I, getting the latter into trouble with both his wife and Erotium, and then rapidly bringing in the father, the doctor, the insanity motif, the attempted arrest, the rescue by Messenio, and the issue of Messenio's emancipation. Plautus has no lack of inventiveness; but his method is to develop his situations, not by concentration, but by pursuing as many ramifications as possible. Note that in neither *Everyman* nor in *Lady Windermere's Fan* do we find mere variety for variety's sake; in *Everyman*, for example, the author uses variety as a means of making more effective what he has to say.

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showing up for dinner on schedule. Before you begin, consult the section of the Glossary which discusses motivation. Remember that, since Plautus is not concerned with character, the problem of motivation is centered in his handling of technical matters of the sort we have discussed.

This should be very useful study: it should give the student some insight into a technical problem which every dramatist must face.

CONCLUSION

We have said that in various ways *The Menaechmi* is founded upon a basic improbability. One could go further and point out that the play is "unscientific": in view of the differing environments, the complete similarity of the twins is impossible. But this is not a relevant criticism of the play, for it is not the business of literature to be scientific. A work of literature makes its statements in its own way, which may or may not happen to be consistent with the scientific beliefs of the day (Milton, for instance, chose in *Paradise Lost* to run counter to astronomical knowledge). Aristotle said approximately this in his paradox-laden remark that in drama "the probable impossible" is preferable to the "possible improbable." A piece of literature may work quite successfully, for instance, in terms of fantasy, which has nothing at all to do with a scientific or a possible world, but which may achieve probability enough, as in *Gulliver's Travels*. The legitimate criticism of *The Menaechmi* is not that the twins are impossibly identical but that they do not behave like probable human beings.

The student may say, "Why should they be probable? Why should they be representative characters? Why should the play mean anything? Why should there be a 'symbolic situation'? It's fast and lively and amusing. Why not let it go at that? What if it is trivial, as you say?"

Well, all that is true enough, and we need not condemn Plautus for not being Congreve. But it is important to be able to distinguish Plautus from Congreve and Shakespeare, and it is with this general distinction that this analysis has been largely occupied. And doubtless there is a place for the enjoyment of Plautus and other writers of farce: the important thing is to know that it is *farce* and not to mistake it for high comedy. In seeing the movies one must especially be aware of this distinction.

But can one merely stop at a certain level and console himself with the thought that he can recognize the level for what it is? Can one be contented very long at the extremely unsophisticated level of farce? (It is worth noting, in fairness to Plautus, that his farces are less unsophisticated than a comparable group of Hollywood productions. There are, of course, the same simple characters, the same plot types, the same happy endings; but Plautus was far less restricted in the materials with which he could deal. He could cover a wider range of experience. Modern taboos have greatly increased the already considerable simplicity of farce.) To enjoy farce one has to make all sorts of allowances and concessions; one can rarely expect characters to be intelligent, discriminating, sensitive or repre-

sentative—one can look for no meaning or significance. That is, one has to eliminate a great deal of one's power of perception; only a few of one's [illegible]

QUESTIONS

1. What problems of exposition does the author eliminate by his use of the prologue?

2. Can you find any justification for Plautus's giving the last scene to Messenio? What effect is he striving for when he has Messenio speak commandingly to the brothers?

3. What similarities do you find between this play and modern theatrical performances? Musical plays?

4. How much use does Plautus make of coincidence? Is this consistent with the tone and manner of farce?

5. How early in the play is the tone of levity established?

6. Does Plautus give us any clues which would lead us to expect Brush's betrayal of his patron?

7. Can you find any evidence of dialogue which seems to be presented for immediate amusement rather than for advancing the action of the play?

8. Note the continuing use of military metaphor in Act I. What is accomplished by this?

9. In Act II. iii what is gained by the careful handing back and forth of the purse?

10. What contribution is made to the plot by Menaechmus II's deciding, at the end of Act II, to see what "booty" he can get in Epidamnus?

11. Does Menaechmus's drunkenness help characterize him at all? Or is it just introduced for whatever comic effect it may have?

12. Is the plot helped by the maid's coaxing Menaechmus II for a gift in Act III. iii?

13. Is there any evidence that the wife's quarrel with her husband is the result of real moral conviction on her part? Or is it just tossed in as a conventional comic device? How can you tell? Consider, in this connection, Menaechmus I's evasion of her in Act IV. ii.

14. Note the various quick turns at the climax of Act IV. ii. Are these characteristic of farce?

15. Is the double lockout of Menaechmus I in Act IV. iii effective? Why?

16. Why, in more serious plays, do we rarely find a main character introduced as late as Menaechmus I's father-in-law is introduced (IV. ii)?

17. How does Plautus keep the father-in-law from being a too obvious character?

18. In Act V. v does Plautus show any psychological insight which suggests a comic level better than that of farce?

19. We have seen (under *Probability*) how Plautus carefully prepares for

Menaechmus II's mistaken inference about his experiences. In *Lady Windermere's Fan* Lady W.'s mistaken inference about her husband's conduct was also important. Compare the efforts of the two dramatists to motivate these mistakes.

20. Does Plautus's play seem to be more or less "well-made" than Wilde's?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

See the analysis of and the questions on Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* in Appendix A.

4. George Lillo. *The London Merchant; or the History of George Barnwell*

When we turn from *The Menaechmi* to *The London Merchant*, we find a very sharp difference in mood; whereas Plautus wanted only to provide a gay entertainment, it is clear from the first scene that Lillo has very serious intentions. Indeed, he is aiming at tragedy, and in terms of the theater he was once very successful. After its first presentation in 1731 the play remained popular for a century; it even had some influence on French and German drama. In reading the play, the student will find it useful to try to discover the reason why the play is no longer the popular theater piece it once was.

THE LONDON MERCHANT;

OR,

THE HISTORY OF GEORGE BARNWELL

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THOROWGOOD
BARNWELL, *Uncle to George*
GEORGE BARNWELL
TRUEMAN
BLUNT
MARIA
MILLWOOD
LUCY

Officers with their Attendants, Keeper, and Footmen

[SCENE: London, and an adjacent Village.]

PROLOGUE

The tragic muse, sublime, delights to show
Princes distressed, and scenes of royal woe,
In awful pomp, majestic, to relate
The fall of nations or some hero's fate,
That sceptered chiefs may by example know
The strange vicissitude of things below;
What danger on security attend,
How pride and cruelty in ruin end;
Hence Providence supreme to know; and own
Humanity adds glory to a throne.
In ev'ry former age, and foreign *tongue,*
With native grandeur thus the goddess sung
Upon our stage indeed with wished success
You've sometimes seen her in a humbler dress,
Great only in distress When she complains
In Southerne's, Rowe's, or Otway's moving strains
The brilliant drops that fall from each bright eye,
The absent pomp with brighter gems supply
Forgive us then, if we attempt to show
In artless strains a tale of private woe.
A London prentice ruined is our theme,
Drawn from the famed old song that bears his name.
We hope your taste is not so high to scorn
A moral tale esteemed e'er you were born,
Which for a century of rolling years
Has filled a thousand-thousand eyes with tears.
If thoughtless youth to warn and shame the age
From vice destructive well becomes the stage,
If this example innocence secure,
Prevents our guilt, or by reflection cure,
If Millwood's dreadful guilt, and sad despair,
Commend the virtue of the good and fair,
Though art be wanting, and our numbers fail,
Indulge th' attempt in justice to the tale

ACT I

[SCENE I A room in Thorowgood's house.]

[*Enter Thorowgood and Trueman*]

Trueman Sir, the packet from Genoa is arrived [*Gives letters*]

Thorowgood Heaven be praised, the storm that threatened our royal mistress, pure religion, liberty, and laws is for a

now attend the slow return of wealth from his new world to supply his empty coffers, e'er he can execute his purposed invasion of our happy island, by which means time is gained to make such preparations on our part as may, heaven concurring, prevent his malice or turn the meditated mischief on himself

Trueman He must be insensible indeed who is not affected when the safety of his country is concerned.—Sir, may I know by what means,—if I am too bold—

Thorowgood Your curiosity is laudable; and I gratify it with the greater pleasure because from thence you may learn how honest merchants, as such, may sometimes contribute to the safety of their country as they do at all times to its happiness, that if hereafter you should be tempted to any action that has the appearance of vice or meanness

in it, upon reflecting on the dignity of our profession, you may with honest scorn reject whatever is unworthy of it.

Trueman: Should Barnwell or I, who have the benefit of your example, by our ill conduct bring any imputation on that honorable name, we must be left without excuse.

Thorowgood: You compliment, young man—[*Trueman bows respectfully.*] Nay, I'm not offended. As the name of merchant never degrades the gentleman, so by no means does it exclude him; only take heed not to purchase the character of complaisant at the expense of your sincerity.—But to answer your question,—the bank of Genoa had agreed, at excessive interest and on good security, to advance the King of Spain a sum of money sufficient to equip his vast armada, of which our peerless Elizabeth (more than in name the mother of her people), being well informed, sent Walsingham,[1] her wise and faithful secretary, to consult the merchants of this loyal city, who all agreed to direct their several agents to influence, if possible, the Genoese to break their contract with the Spanish court. 'Tis done, the state and bank of Genoa, having maturely weighed and rightly judged of their true interest, prefer the friendship of the merchants of London to that of a monarch who proudly styles himself King of both Indies.

Trueman: Happy success of prudent councils. What an expense of blood and treasure is here saved!—Excellent queen! O how unlike to former princes, who made the danger of foreign enemies a pretense to oppress their subjects, by taxes great and grievous to be borne.

Thorowgood: Not so our gracious queen, whose richest exchequer is h... people's love as their happiness h... greatest glory.

... worthy her who confers it, and well worth our acceptance. Sir, have you any commands for me at this time?

Thorowgood: Only to look carefully over the files to see whether there are any tradesmen's bills unpaid; and if there are, to send and discharge 'em. We must not let artificers lose their time, so useful to the public and their families, in unnecessary attendance. [*Exit Trueman.*]

SCENE II

[*Thorowgood and Maria, who enters.*]

Thorowgood: Well, Maria, have you given orders for the entertainment? I would have it in some measure worthy the guests. Let there be plenty, and of the best, that the courtiers, though they should deny us citizens politeness, may at least commend our hospitality.

Maria: Sir, I have endeavored not to wrong your well-known generosity by an ill-timed parsimony.

Thorowgood: Nay, 'twas a needless caution; I have no cause to doubt your prudence.

Maria: Sir! I find myself unfit for conversation at present. I should but increase the number of the company, without adding to their satisfaction.

Thorowgood: Nay, my child, this melancholy must not be indulged.

Maria: Company will but increase it. I wish you would dispense with my absence; solitude best suits my present temper.

Thorowgood: You are not insensible that it is chiefly on your account these noble lords do me the honor so fre- ... to grace my board; should you ... t, the ... ointment may ... re... ndescension

verse with a gentleman and merchant of your worth and character, may confer honor by so doing, but he loses none.

Thorowgood. Come, come, Maria, I need not tell you that a young gentleman may prefer your conversation to mine, yet intend me no disrespect at all; for though he may lose no honor in my company, 'tis very natural for him to expect more pleasure in yours. I remember the time when the company of the greatest and wisest man in the kingdom would have been insipid and tiresome to me, if it had deprived me of an opportunity of enjoying your mother's.

Maria: Yours no doubt was as agreeable to her; for generous minds know no pleasure in society but where 'tis mutual.

Thorowgood: Thou know'st I have no heir, no child, but thee; the fruits of many years' successful industry must all be thine. Now it would give me pleasure great as my love, to see on whom you would bestow it. I am daily solicited by men of the greatest rank and merit for leave to address you, but I have hitherto declined it, in hopes that by observation I should learn which way your inclination tends; for as I know love to be essential to happiness in the marriage state, I had rather my approbation should confirm your choice than direct it.

Maria: What can I say? How shall I answer as I ought this tenderness, so uncommon even in the best of parents; but you are without example; yet had you been less indulgent, I had been most wretched. That I look on the crowd of courtiers that visit here with equal esteem but equal indifference you have observed, and I must needs confess; yet had you asserted your authority, and insisted on a parent's right to be obeyed, I had submitted, and to my duty sacrificed my peace.

Thorowgood: From your perfect obedience in every other instance, I feared as much; and therefore would leave you without a bias in an affair wherein your happiness is so immediately concerned.

Maria: Whether from a want of that just ambition that would become your daughter or from some other cause I know not; but I find high birth and titles don't recommend the man who owns them, to my affections.

Thorowgood: I would not that they should, unless his merit recommends him more. A noble birth and fortune, though they make not a bad man good, yet they are a real advantage to a worthy one, and place his virtues in the fairest light.

Maria. I cannot answer for my inclinations, but they shall ever be submitted to your wisdom and authority; and as you will not compel me to marry where I cannot love, so love shall never make me act contrary to my duty. Sir, have I your permission to retire?

Thorowgood I'll see you to your chamber [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE III. A room in Millwood's house]

[*Discovered Millwood. Lucy waiting*]

Millwood How do I look today, Lucy?

Lucy O, killingly, madam!—A little more red, and you'll be irresistible!—But why this more than ordinary care of your dress and complexion? What new conquest are you aiming at?

Millwood A conquest would be new indeed!

Lucy: Not to you, who make 'em every day,—but to me —Well! 'tis what I'm never to expect,—unfortunate as I am.—But your wit and beauty—

Millwood First made me a wretch, and still continue me so —Men, however generous or sincere to one another, are all selfish hypocrites in their affairs with us. We are no otherwise esteemed or regarded by them, but as we contribute to their satisfaction.

Lucy You are certainly, madam, on

the wrong side in this argument. Is not the expense all theirs? And I am sure it is our own fault if we haven't our share of the pleasure.

Millwood: We are but slaves to men.

Lucy: Nay, 'tis they that are slaves most certainly; for we lay them under contribution.

Millwood: Slaves have no property; no, not even in themselves.—All is the victor's.

Lucy: You are strangely arbitrary in your principles, madam.

Millwood: I would have my conquests complete, like those of the Spaniards in the New World, who first plundered the natives of all the wealth they had, and then condemned the wretches to the mines for life to work for more.

Lucy: Well, I shall never approve of your scheme of government. I should think it much more politic, as well as just, to find my subjects an easier employment.

Millwood: It's a general maxim among the knowing part of mankind that a woman without virtue, like a man without honor or honesty, is capable of any action, though never so vile; and yet what pains will they not take, what arts not use, to seduce us from our innocence and make us contemptible and wicked even in their own opinions? Then is it not just, the villains, to their cost, should find us so?—But guilt makes them suspicious, and keeps them on their guard; therefore we can take advantage only of the young and innocent part of the sex, who, having never injured women, apprehend no injury from them.

Lucy: Ay, they must be young indeed.

Millwood: Such a one, I think, I have found.—As I've passed through the City, I have often observed him receiving and paying considerable sums of money; from thence I conclude he is employed in affairs of consequence.

Lucy: Is he handsome?

Millwood: Ay, ay, the stripling is well made.

Lucy: About—

Millwood: Eighteen—

Lucy: Innocent, handsome, and about eighteen.—You'll be vastly happy.—Why, if you manage well, you may keep him to yourself these two or three years.

Millwood: If I manage well, I shall have done with him much sooner; having long had a design on him, and meeting him yesterday, I made a full stop and, gazing wishfully on his face, asked him his name. He blushed, and bowing very low, answered, George Barnwell. I begged his pardon for the freedom I had taken, and told him that he was the person I had long wished to see, and to whom I had an affair of importance to communicate at a proper time and place. He named a tavern; I talked of honor and reputation, and invited him to my house. He swallowed the bait, promised to come, and this is the time I expect him. [*Knocking at the door.*] Somebody knocks,—d'ye hear? I am at home to nobody today, but him.—[*Exit Lucy.*]

Scene IV

Millwood

Millwood: Less affairs must give way to those of more consequence; and I am strangely mistaken if this does not prove of great importance to me and him, too, before I have done with him.—Now, after what manner shall I receive him? Let me consider—What manner of person am I to receive?—He is young, innocent, and bashful; therefore I must take care not to shock him at first.—But then, if I have any skill in physiognomy, he is amorous, and, with a little assistance, will soon get the better of his modesty.—I'll trust to nature, who does wonders in these matters.—If to seem what one is not, in order to be the better liked for what one really is; if to speak one thing, and mean the direct contrary, be art in a woman, I know nothing of nature.

SCENE V

[*Enter to her, Barnwell bowing very low, and Lucy at a distance.*]

Millwood: Sir, the surprise and joy!—

Barnwell. Madam —

Millwood: This is such a favor,—[*Advancing.*]

Barnwell: Pardon me, madam,—

Millwood: So unhoped for,—[*Still advances. Barnwell salutes her, and retires in confusion.*]

Millwood: To see you here—Excuse the confusion—

Barnwell: I fear I am too bold.—

Millwood: Alas, sir! All my apprehensions proceed from my fears of your thinking me so —Please, sir, to sit.—I am as much at a loss how to receive this honor as I ought, as I am surprised at your goodness in conferring it.

Barnwell: I thought you had expected me —I promised to come

Millwood. That is the more surprising, few men are such religious observers of their word.

Barnwell: All who are honest are

Millwood: To one another.—But we silly women are seldom thought of consequence enough to gain a place in your remembrance. [*Laying her hand on his, as by accident.*]

Barnwell. [*Aside.*] Her disorder is so great, she don't perceive she has laid her hand on mine —Heaven! how she trembles!—What can this mean!

Millwood: The interest I have in all that relates to you (the reason of which you shall know hereafter) excites my curiosity; and, were I sure you would pardon my presumption, I should desire to know your real sentiments on a very particular affair.

Barnwell: Madam, you may command my poor thoughts on any subject, —I have none that I would conceal.

Millwood: You'll think me bold.

Barnwell: No, indeed.

Millwood: What then are your thoughts of love?

Barnwell: If you mean the love of women, I have not thought of it [at] all. —My youth and circumstances make such thoughts improper in me yet. But if you mean the general love we owe to mankind, I think no one has more of it in his temper than myself.—I don't know that person in the world whose happiness I don't wish, and wouldn't promote, were it in my power.—In an especial manner I love my uncle, and my master, but above all my friend.

Millwood: You have a friend then whom you love?

Barnwell: As he does me, sincerely.

Millwood: He is, no doubt, often blessed with your company and conversation.—

Barnwell: We live in one house together, and both serve the same worthy merchant.

Millwood Happy, happy youth!—Who e'er thou art, I envy thee, and so must all who see and know this youth.—What I have lost, by being formed a woman!—I hate my sex, myself —Had I been a man, I might, perhaps, have been as happy in your friendship as he who now enjoys it:—But as it is,—Oh!—

Barnwell [*Aside.*] I never observed women before, or this is sure the most beautiful of her sex.—You seem disordered, madam! May I know the cause?

Millwood Do not ask me —I can never speak it, whatever is the cause;—I wish for things impossible;—I would be a servant, bound to the same master as you are, to live in one house with you

Barnwell [*Aside.*] How strange, and yet how kind, her words and actions are! —And the effect they have on me is as strange —I feel desires I never knew before;—I must be gone, while I have power to go [*To Millwood.*]—Madam, I humbly take my leave.—

Millwood You will not sure leave me so soon!

Barnwell Indeed I must.

Millwood: You cannot be so cruel!—I have prepared a poor supper, at which I promised myself your company.

Barnwell: I am sorry I must refuse the honor that you designed me;—but my duty to my master calls me hence.—I never yet neglected his service. He is so gentle and so good a master that should I wrong him, though he might forgive me, I never should forgive myself.

Millwood: Am I refused, by the first man, the second favor I ever stooped to ask?—Go then, thou proud, hard-hearted youth.—But know, you are the only man that could be found, who would let me sue twice for greater favors.

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] What shall I do!—How shall I go or stay!

Millwood: Yet do not, do not, leave me. I wish my sex's pride would meet your scorn; but when I look upon you, when I behold those eyes,—oh! spare my tongue, and let my blushes speak. This flood of tears to that will force their way, and declare—what woman's modesty should hide.

Barnwell: Oh, heavens! she loves me, worthless as I am; her looks, her words, her flowing tears confess it. And can I leave her then? Oh, never, never! Madam, dry up those tears. You shall command me always; I will stay here for ever, if you'd have me.

Lucy: [*Aside.*] So! she has wheedled him out of his virtue of obedience already and will strip him of all the rest one after another till she has left him as few as her ladyship or myself.

Millwood: Now you are kind, indeed; but I mean not to detain you always: I would have you shake off all slavish obedience to your master;—but you may serve him still.

Lucy: Serve him still!—Aye, or he'll have no opportunity of fingering his cash, and then he'll not serve your end, I'll be sworn.

SCENE VI

[*Enter to them Blunt.*]

Blunt: Madam, supper's on the table.

Millwood: Come, sir, you'll excuse all defects. My thoughts were too much employed on my guest to observe the entertainment. [*Exeunt Millwood and Barnwell.*]

SCENE VII

[*Manent Lucy and Blunt.*]

Blunt: What! is all this preparation, this elegant supper, variety of wines and music, for the entertainment of that young fellow!

Lucy: So it seems.

Blunt: What, is our mistress turned fool at last! She's in love with him, I suppose.

Lucy: I suppose not, but she designs to make him in love with her if she can.

Blunt: What will she get by that? He seems under age, and can't be supposed to have much money.

Lucy: But his master has; and that's the same thing, as she'll manage it.

Blunt: I don't like this fooling with a handsome young fellow; while she's endeavoring to ensnare him, she may be caught herself.

Lucy: Nay, were she like me, that would certainly be the consequence;—for, I confess, there is something in youth and innocence that moves me mightily.

Blunt: Yes, so does the smoothness and plumpness of a partridge move a mighty desire in the hawk to be the destruction of it.

Lucy: Why, birds are their prey, as men are ours; though, as you observed, we are sometimes caught ourselves. But that, I dare say, will never be the case with our mistress.

Blunt: I wish it may prove so; for you know we all depend upon her.

Should she trifle away her time with a young fellow that there's nothing to be got by, we must all starve.

Lucy: There's no danger of that, for I am sure she has no view in this affair but interest.

Blunt: Well, and what hopes are there of success in that?

Lucy: The most promising that can be.—'Tis true, the youth has his scruples; but she'll soon teach him to answer them, by stifling his conscience.—O, the lad is in a hopeful way, depend upon't. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE VIII. Another room in Millwood's house.]

[*Discovered Barnwell and Millwood at an entertainment.*]

Barnwell. What can I answer! All that I know is, that you are fair and I am miserable

Millwood: We are both so, and yet the fault is in ourselves.

Barnwell: To ease our present anguish, by plunging into guilt, is to buy a moment's pleasure with an age of pain.

Millwood: I should have thought the joys of love as lasting as they are great. If ours prove otherwise, 'tis your inconstancy must make them so

Barnwell: The law of heaven will not be reversed, and that requires us to govern our passions.

Millwood: To give us sense of beauty and desires, and yet forbid us to taste and be happy, is cruelty to nature. Have we passions only to torment us!

Barnwell: To hear you talk, tho' in the cause of vice, to gaze upon your beauty, press your hand, and see your snow-white bosom heave and fall, enflames my wishes; my pulse beats high, my senses all are in a hurry, and I am on the rack of wild desire; yet for a moment's guilty pleasure, shall I lose my innocence, my peace of mind, and hopes of solid happiness?

Millwood. Chimeras all,—
Come on with me and prove,
No joy's like woman, kind, nor heaven like love.

Barnwell I would not, yet I must on
Reluctant thus, the merchant quits his ease
And trusts to rocks and sands and stormy seas;
In hopes some unknown golden coast to find,
Commits himself, tho' doubtful, to the wind,
Longs much for joys to come, yet mourns those left behind. [*Exeunt.*]

QUESTIONS ON ACT I

1. What does Lillo appear to be doing in Scene I? Could the scene be omitted without loss?

2. Where does the exposition first ge

3. Does Lillo inadvertently convict

4. In Scene ii, why does Lillo have
have no heir, no child but thee, etc."? Is the speech convincing?

5. Note the abstract, generalized words and forms of expression used by Maria in her last two speeches in Scene ii. How do such words influence the effectiveness of what she says?

6. In Scene iii, would Lillo gain anything by having Barnwell mentioned earlier in the scene?

7. Is there any awkwardness in the way in which Lillo carries out his intentions in Scene iii?

8. Could you make a case for having the first part of the play deal with a

Barnwell who has already seen Millwood and is struggling with temptation? How might this reduce some of the difficulties faced in Scene v?

ACT II

[SCENE I. A room in Thorowgood's house.]

[*Enter Barnwell.*]

Barnwell: How strange are all things round me! Like some thief, who treads forbidden ground, fearful I enter each apartment of this well-known house. To guilty love, as if that was too little, already have I added breach of trust. A thief! Can I know myself that wretched thing, and look my honest friend and injured master in the face? Though hypocrisy may a while conceal my guilt, at length it will be known, and public shame and ruin must ensue. In the meantime, what must be my life? Ever to speak a language foreign to my heart; hourly to add to the number of my crimes in order to conceal 'em. Sure, such was the condition of the grand apostate, when first he lost his purity; like me disconsolate he wandered, and while yet in Heaven, bore all his future hell about him. [*Enter Trueman.*]

SCENE II

[*Barnwell and Trueman.*]

Trueman: Barnwell! O how I rejoice to see you safe! So will our master and his gentle daughter, who during your absence often inquired after you.

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] Would he were gone, his officious love will pry into the secrets of my soul.

Trueman: Unless you knew the pain the whole family has felt on your account, you can't conceive how much you are beloved. But why thus cold and silent? When my heart is full of joy for your return, why do you turn away? Why thus avoid me? What have I done? How am I altered since you saw me last? Or rather what have you done, and why are you thus changed, for I am still the same?

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] What have I done indeed?

Trueman: Not speak nor look upon me.

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] By my face he will discover all I would conceal; methinks already I begin to hate him.

Trueman: I cannot bear this usage from a friend, one whom till now I ever found so loving, whom yet I love, though this unkindness strikes at the root of friendship, and might destroy it in any breast but mine.

Barnwell: I am not well. [*Turning to him.*] Sleep has been a stranger to these eyes since you beheld them last.

Trueman: Heavy they look indeed, and swollen with tears; now they o'erflow; rightly did my sympathizing heart forebode last night when thou wast absent something fatal to our peace.

Barnwell: Your friendship engages you too far. My troubles, whate'er they are, are mine alone; you have no interest in them, nor ought your concern for me give you a moment's pain.

Trueman: You speak as if you knew of friendship nothing but the name. Before I saw your grief I felt it. Since we parted last I have slept no more than you, but, pensive in my chamber, sat alone and spent the tedious night in wishes for your safety and return; e'en now, though ignorant of the cause, your sorrow wounds me to the heart.

Barnwell: 'Twill not be always thus. Friendship and all engagements cease, as circumstances and occasions vary; and since you once may hate me, perhaps it might be better for us both that now you loved me less.

Trueman: Sure I but dream! Without a cause would Barnwell use me thus? Ungenerous and ungrateful youth, fare-

well.—I shall endeavor to follow your advice,—[*Going.*] Yet stay, perhaps I am too rash, and angry when the cause demands compassion Some unforeseen calamity may have befallen him, too great to bear.

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] What part am I reduced to act; 'tis vile and base to move his temper thus, the best of friends and men.

Trueman: I am to blame, prithee forgive me, Barnwell. Try to compose your ruffled mind, and let me know the cause that thus transports you from yourself, my friendly counsel may restore your peace.

Barnwell: All that is possible for man to do for man, your generous friendship may effect; but here even that's in vain.

Trueman: Something dreadful is laboring in your breast. O give it vent and let me share your grief! 'Twill ease your pain should it admit no cure and make it lighter by the part I bear.

Barnwell: Vain supposition! My woes increase by being observed, should the cause be known they would exceed all bounds.

Trueman: So well I know thy honest heart, guilt cannot harbor there

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] O torture insupportable!

Trueman: Then why am I excluded? Have I a thought I would conceal from you?

Barnwell. If still you urge me on this hated subject, I'll never enter more beneath this roof, nor see your face again.

Trueman: 'Tis strange. But I have done; say but you hate me not

Barnwell: Hate you!—I am not that monster yet.

Trueman. Shall our friendship still continue?

Barnwell: It's a blessing I never was worthy of, yet now must stand on terms; and upon conditions can confirm it.

Trueman: What are they?

Barnwell Never hereafter, though you should wonder at my conduct, desire to know more than I am willing to reveal.

Trueman: 'Tis hard, but upon any conditions I must be your friend.

Barnwell: Then, as much as one lost to himself can be another's, I am yours. [*Embracing.*]

Trueman: Be ever so, and may Heaven restore your peace.

Barnwell: Will yesterday return? We have heard the glorious sun, that till then incessant rolled, once stopped his rapid course and once went back. The dead have risen; and parched rocks poured forth a liquid stream to quench a people's thirst. The sea divided and formed walls of water while a whole nation passed in safety through its sandy bosom. Hungry lions have refused their prey; and men unhurt have walked amidst consuming flames, but never yet did time once past, return.

Trueman: Though the continued chain of time has never once been broke, nor ever will, but uninterrupted must keep on its course till lost in eternity it ends there where it first begun; yet as Heaven can repair whatever evils time can bring upon us, he who trusts heaven ought never to despair But business requires our attendance, business the youth's best preservative from ill, as idleness [is] his worst of snares Will you go with me?

Barnwell I'll take a little time to reflect on what has past, and follow you. [*Exit Trueman*]

SCENE III

Barnwell

[illegible] heaven requires that I forsake her. What! Never see her more! Does heaven require that! I hope I may see her, and heaven not be offended. Presumptuous hope!

Dearly already have I proved my frailty; should I once more tempt heaven, I may be left to fall never to rise again. Yet shall I leave her, forever leave her, and not let her know the cause? She who loves me with such a boundless passion? Can cruelty be duty? I judge of what she then must feel, by what I now endure. The love of life and fear of shame, opposed by inclination strong as death or shame, like wind and tide in raging conflict met, when neither can prevail, keep me in doubt. How then can I determine? [*Enter Thorowgood.*]

SCENE IV

[*Thorowgood and Barnwell.*]

Thorowgood: Without a cause assigned, or notice given, to absent yourself last night was a fault, young man, and I came to chide you for it, but hope I am prevented. That modest blush, the confusion so visible in your face, speak grief and shame. When we have offended heaven, it requires no more; and shall man, who needs himself to be forgiven, be harder to appease? If my pardon or love be of moment to your peace, look up, secure of both.

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] This goodness has o'ercome me.—O sir! You know not the nature and extent of my offence; and I should abuse your mistaken bounty to receive 'em. Though I had rather die than speak my shame; though racks could not have forced the guilty secret from my breast, your kindness has.

Thorowgood: Enough, enough! Whate'er it be, this concern shows you're convinced, and I am satisfied. How painful is the sense of guilt to an ingenuous mind!—some youthful folly, which it were prudent not to enquire into. When we consider the frail condition of humanity, it may raise our pity, not our wonder, that youth should go astray; when reason, weak at the best when opposed to inclination, scarce formed, and wholly unassisted by experience, faintly contends, or willingly becomes the slave of sense. The state of youth is much to be deplored, and the more so because they see it not; they being then to danger most exposed, when they are least prepared for their defence.

Barnwell: It will be known, and you recall your pardon and abhor me.

Thorowgood: I never will; so heaven confirm to me the pardon of my offences. Yet be upon your guard in this gay, thoughtless season of your life; now, when the sense of pleasure's quick, and passion high, the voluptuous appetites, raging and fierce, demand the strongest curb; take heed of a relapse. When vice becomes habitual, the very power of leaving it is lost.

Barnwell: Hear me, then, on my knees confess.

Thorowgood: I will not hear a syllable more upon this subject; it were not mercy, but cruelty, to hear what must give you such torment to reveal.

Barnwell: This generosity amazes and distracts me.

Thorowgood: This remorse makes thee dearer to me than if thou hadst never offended; whatever is your fault, of this I'm certain, 'twas harder for you to offend than me to pardon. [*Exit Thorowgood.*]

SCENE V

[*Barnwell.*]

Barnwell: Villain, villain, villain! basely to wrong so excellent a man. Should I again return to folly?—detested thought!—But what of Millwood then? Why, I renounce her; I give her up; the struggle's over, and virtue has prevailed. Reason may convince, but gratitude compels. This unlooked for generosity has saved me from destruction. [*Going.*]

SCENE VI

[*To him a Footman.*]

Footman: Sir, two ladies, from your uncle in the country, desire to see you.

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] Who should they be? Tell them I'll wait upon 'em.

SCENE VII

[*Barnwell*]

Barnwell: Methinks I dread to see 'em. *Guilt, what a coward hast thou made me?* Now everything alarms me. [*Exit.*]

SCENE VIII

[Another room in Thorowgood's house]

[*Discovered Millwood and Lucy, and to them enters a Footman.*]

Footman: Ladies, he'll wait upon you immediately.

Millwood: 'Tis very well. I thank you. [*Enter Barnwell.*]

SCENE IX

[*Barnwell, Millwood, and Lucy*]

Barnwell: Confusion! Millwood!

Millwood: That angry look tells me that here I'm an unwelcome guest; I feared as much,—the unhappy are so everywhere.

Barnwell: Will nothing but my utter ruin content you?

Millwood: Unkind and cruel! lost myself, your happiness is now my only care.

Barnwell How did you gain admission?

Millwood: Saying we were desired by your uncle to visit and deliver a message to you, we were received by the family without suspicion, and with much respect directed here.

Barnwell: Why did you come at all?

Millwood: I never shall trouble you more; I'm come to take my leave forever. Such is the malice of my fate, I go hopeless, despairing ever to return. This hour is all I have left me. One short hour is all I have to bestow on love and you, for whom I thought the longest life too short.

Barnwell: Then we are met to part forever?

Millwood: It must be so; yet think not that time or absence ever shall put a period to my grief or make me love you less; though I must leave you, yet condemn me not.

Barnwell: Condemn you? No, I approve your resolution, and rejoice to hear it; *'tis just, 'tis necessary. I have* well weighed, and found it so.

Lucy: [*Aside.*] I'm afraid the young man has more sense than she thought he had.

Barnwell: Before you came I had determined never to see you more.

Millwood: [*Aside.*] Confusion!

Lucy [*Aside.*] Ay! we are all out, this is a turn so unexpected, that I shall make nothing of my part; they must e'en play the scene betwixt themselves

Millwood: 'Twas some relief to think, though absent, you would love me still; but to find, though fortune had been kind, that you, more cruel and inconstant, had resolved to cast me off. This, as I never could expect, I have not learnt to bear.

Barnwell: I am sorry to hear you blame in me a resolution that so well *becomes us both*

Millwood: I have reason for what I do, but you have none.

Barnwell Can we want a reason for parting, who have so many to wish we never had met?

Millwood: Look on me, Barnwell; am I deformed or old, that satiety so soon succeeds enjoyment? Nay, look again; am I not she whom yesterday you thought the fairest and the kindest of her sex, whose hand, trembling with ecstasy, you pressed and molded thus, while on my eyes you gazed with such delight, as if desire increased by being fed?

Barnwell: No more! Let me repent my former follies, if possible, without remembering what they were

Millwood Why?

Barnwell Such is my frailty that 'tis dangerous.

Millwood: Where is the danger, since we are to part?

Barnwell: The thought of that already is too painful.

Millwood: If it be painful to part, then I may hope at least you do not hate me?

Barnwell: No,—no,—I never said I did!—O my heart!

Millwood: Perhaps you pity me?

Barnwell: I do, I do, indeed, I do.

Millwood: You'll think upon me?

Barnwell: Doubt it not while I can think at all.

Millwood: You may judge an embrace at parting too great a favor, though it would be the last? [*He draws back.*] A look shall then suffice,—farewell forever. [*Exeunt Millwood and Lucy.*]

SCENE X

[*Barnwell.*]

Barnwell: If to resolve to suffer be to conquer, I have conquered. Painful victory!

SCENE XI

[*Barnwell; Millwood and Lucy who return.*]

Millwood: One thing I had forgot. I never must return to my own house again. This I thought proper to let you know, lest your mind should change, and you should seek in vain to find me there. Forgive me this second intrusion; I only came to give you this caution, and that, perhaps, was needless.

Barnwell: I hope it was, yet it is kind, and I must thank you for it.

Millwood: My friend, your arm. [*To Lucy.*] Now I am gone forever. [*Going.*]

Barnwell: One thing more;—sure, there's no danger in my knowing where you go? If you think otherwise—

Millwood: Alas! [*Weeping.*]

Lucy: [*Aside.*] We are right I find, that's my cue.—Ah; dear sir, she's going she knows not whither; but go she must.

Barnwell: Humanity obliges me to wish you well; why will you thus expose yourself to needless troubles?

Lucy: Nay, there's no help for it. She must quit the town immediately, and the kingdom as soon as possible; it was no small matter, you may be sure, that could make her resolve to leave you.

Millwood: No more, my friend; since he for whose dear sake alone I suffer, and am content to suffer, is kind and pities me. Where'er I wander through wilds and deserts, benighted and forlorn, that thought shall give me comfort.

Barnwell: For my sake! O tell me how; which way am I so cursed as to bring such ruin on thee?

Millwood: No matter, I am contented with my lot.

Barnwell: Leave me not in this incertainty.

Millwood: I have said too much.

Barnwell: How, how am I the cause of your undoing?

Millwood: 'Twill but increase your troubles.

Barnwell: My troubles can't be greater than they are.

Lucy: Well, well, sir, if she won't satisfy you, I will.

Barnwell: I am bound to you beyond expression.

Millwood: Remember, sir, that I desired you not to hear it.

Barnwell: Begin, and ease my racking expectation.

Lucy: Why you must know, my lady here was an only child; but her parents dying while she was young, left her and her fortune, (no inconsiderable one, I assure you) to the care of a gentleman who has a good estate of his own.

Millwood: Ay, ay, the barbarous man is rich enough;—but what are riches when compared to love?

Lucy: For a while he performed the office of a faithful guardian, settled her in a house, hired her servants;—but you have seen in what manner she lived, so I need say no more of that.

Millwood: How I shall live hereafter, heaven knows.

[illegible]

the man is neither old nor ugly, but a good, personable sort of a man, but I don't know how it was, she could never endure him, that he brought in an account of his executorship, wherein he makes her debtor to him.—

Millwood: A trifle in itself, but more than enough to ruin me, whom, by this unjust account, he had stripped of all before.

Lucy: Now she having neither money nor friend, except me, who am as unfortunate as herself, he compelled her to pass his account, and give bond for the sum he demanded; but still provided handsomely for her and continued his courtship, till, being informed by his spies (truly I suspect some in her own family) that you were entertained at her house, and stayed with her all night, he came this morning raving, and storming like a madman, talks no more of marriage (so there's no hopes of making up matters that way) but vows her ruin, unless she'll allow him the same favor that he supposes she granted you

Barnwell: Must she be ruined, or find her refuge in another's arms?

Millwood: He gave me but an hour to resolve in, that's happily spent with you;—and now I go.—

Barnwell. To be exposed to all the rigors of the various seasons, the summer's parching heat, and winter's cold; unhoused to wander friendless through the unhospitable world, in misery and want; attended with fear and danger, and pursued by malice and revenge, wouldst thou endure all this for me, and can I do nothing, nothing to prevent it?

Lucy. 'Tis really a pity, there can be no way found out.

Barnwell: O where are all my resolutions now? Like early vapors, or the morning dew, chased by the sun's warm beams they're vanished and lost, as though they had never been.

Lucy: Now I advised her, sir, to comply with the gentleman, that would not only put an end to her troubles, but make her fortune at once.

Barnwell: Tormenting fiend, away!—I had rather perish, nay, see her perish, than have her saved by him; I will myself prevent her ruin, though with my own. A moment's patience, I'll return immediately.—[*Exit.*]

SCENE XII

[*Millwood and Lucy.*]

Lucy: 'Twas well you came, or, by what I can perceive, you had lost him.

Millwood. That, I must confess, was a danger I did not foresee; I was only afraid he should have come without money. You know a house of entertainment like mine, is not kept with nothing.

Lucy: That's very true; but then you should be reasonable in your demands; 'tis pity to discourage a young man. [*Enter Barnwell.*]

SCENE XIII

[*Barnwell, Millwood, and Lucy.*]

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] What am I about to do! Now you, who boast your reason all sufficient, suppose yourselves in my condition, and determine for me, [illegible] past

Lucy: [*Aside.*] These young sinners think everything in the ways of wickedness so strange,—but I could tell him that this is nothing but what's very common, for one vice as naturally begets another, as a father a son. But he'll find out that himself, if he lives long enough

Barnwell: Here take this, and with it purchase your deliverance, return to your house, and live in peace and safety.

Millwood. So I may hope to see you there again

Barnwell Answer me not,—but fly,—

lest, in the agonies of my remorse, I take again what is not mine to give, and abandon thee to want and misery.

Millwood: Say but you'll come.—

Barnwell: You are my fate, my heaven, or my hell. Only leave me now, dispose of me hereafter as you please. [*Exeunt Millwood and Lucy.*]

SCENE XIV

[*Barnwell.*]

What have I done? Were my resolutions founded on reason, and sincerely made? why then has heaven suffered me to fall? I sought not the occasion; and, if my heart deceives me not, compassion and generosity were my motives. Is virtue inconsistent with itself, or are vice and virtue only empty names? Or do they depend on accidents beyond our power to produce, or to prevent, wherein we have no part, and yet must be determined by the event?—But why should I attempt to reason? All is confusion, horror, and remorse;—I find I am lost, cast down from all my late erected hopes and plunged again in guilt, yet scarce know how or why—

Such undistinguished horrors make my brain,
Like hell, the seat of darkness, and of pain. [*Exit.*]

QUESTIONS ON ACT II

1. Note Thorowgood's last speech in Scene iv. Why does it make for a sentimental effect?
2. What effect is produced by the method which Lucy and Millwood use in Scene xi to win back Barnwell?
3. Study Barnwell's next-to-last speech in Scene ii. How successful is Lillo in conveying Barnwell's feelings? Is the method right?
4. In Thorowgood's first speech in Scene iv, what is the matter with his use of the phrase, "When we have offended Heaven"? With his later use of all the nouns that are capitalized?
5. Do Barnwell's soliloquies in Scenes i, iii, and xiv accomplish what the author intends? Why?
6. What does Lillo intend to indicate by the near-quarrel in Scene ii? Is the embrace the proper outcome for this scene? How can we account for the author's using such an ending?
7. In this act we see the extremes to which an old style of breaking up the act was carried: with each change of persons on the stage, a new scene is indicated. What is the objection to this method of division?

ACT III

SCENE I

[*Enter Thorowgood and Trueman.*]

Thorowgood: Methinks I would not have you only learn the method of merchandize and practise it hereafter merely as a means of getting wealth. 'Twill be well worth your pains to study it as a science. See how it is founded in reason and the nature of things. How it has promoted humanity, as it has opened and yet keeps up an intercourse between nations far remote from one another in situation, customs, and religion; promoting arts, industry, peace and plenty; by mutual benefits diffusing mutual love from pole to pole.

Trueman: Something of this I have considered, and hope, by your assistance, to extend my thoughts much

farther. I have observed those countries [illegible] ship, to tame the fierce, and polish the most savage, to teach them the advantages of honest traffic by taking from them with their own consent their useless superfluities, and giving them in return what, from their ignorance in manual arts, their situation, or some other accident they stand in need of

Thorowgood: 'Tis justly observed The populous east, luxuriant, abounds with glittering gems, bright pearls, aromatic spices, and health-restoring drugs. The late found western world glows with unnumbered veins of gold and silver ore. [illegible] business to collect the various blessings of each soil and climate, and, with the product of the whole, to enrich his native country

Well! I have examined your accounts They are not only just, as I have always found them, but regularly kept, and fairly entered. I commend your diligence. Method in business is the surest guide. He who neglects it frequently stumbles, and always wanders perplexed, uncertain, and in danger. Are Barnwell's accounts ready for my inspection? He does not use to be the last on these occasions

Trueman: Upon receiving your orders [illegible] neglect.

Thorowgood: I'm now going to the Exchange; let him know, at my return, I expect to find him ready. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

[*Enter Maria with a book; she sits and reads.*]

Maria: How forcible is truth! The weakest mind, inspired with love of that, fixed and collected in itself, with indifference beholds the united force of earth and hell opposing Such souls are raised above the sense of pain, or so supported that they regard it not. The martyr cheaply purchases his heaven. Small are his sufferings, great is his reward; not so the wretch who combats love with duty, when the mind, weakened and dissolved by the soft passion, feeble and hopeless opposes its own desire. What is an hour, a day, a year of pain, to a whole life of tortures, such as these? [*Enter Trueman.*]

SCENE III

[*Trueman and Maria.*]

[illegible] "] O, my friend, [illegible] What of him? Speak, say what of Barnwell?

Trueman 'Tis not to be concealed. I've news to tell of him that will afflict your generous father, yourself, and all who knew him.

Maria. Defend us, Heaven!

Trueman. I cannot speak it.—See there. [*Gives a letter, Maria reads.*]

Maria:

Trueman,

I know my absence will surprise my honored master, and yourself, and the more, when you shall understand that the reason of my withdrawing, is my having embezzled part of the cash with which I was entrusted. After this, 'tis needless to inform you that I intend never to return again. Though this might have been known by examining my accounts, yet, to prevent that unnecessary trouble, and to cut all fruitless expectations of my return, I have left this from the lost

George Barnwell.

Trueman: Lost indeed! Yet how he should be guilty of what he there charges himself withal, raises my wonder equal to my grief. Never had youth a higher sense of virtue Justly he thought, and as he thought he practised; never was

life more regular than his; an understanding uncommon at his years; an open, generous, manliness of temper; his manners easy, unaffected and engaging.

Maria: This and much more you might have said with truth.—He was the delight of every eye, and joy of every heart that knew him.

Trueman: Since such he was, and was my friend, can I support his loss? See, the fairest and happiest maid this wealthy city boasts, kindly condescends to weep for thy unhappy fate, poor, ruined Barnwell!

Maria: Trueman, do you think a soul so delicate as his, so sensible of shame, can e'er submit to live a slave to vice?

Trueman: Never, never! So well I know him, I'm sure this act of his, so contrary to his nature, must have been caused by some unavoidable necessity.

Maria: Is there no means yet to preserve him?

Trueman: O! that there were!—But few men recover reputation lost, a merchant never. Nor would he, I fear, though I should find him, ever be brought to look his injured master in the face.

Maria: I fear as much,—and therefore would never have my father know it.

Trueman: That's impossible.

Maria: What's the sum?

Trueman: 'Tis considerable.—I've marked it here, to show it, with the letter, to your father, at his return.

Maria: If I should supply the money, could you so dispose of that, and the account, as to conceal this unhappy mismanagement from my father?

Trueman: Nothing more easy.—But can you intend it? Will you save a helpless wretch from ruin? Oh! 'twere an act worthy such exalted virtue as Maria's. —Sure, heaven in mercy to my friend inspired the generous thought!

Maria: Doubt not but I would purchase so great a happiness at a much dearer price.—But how shall he be found?

Trueman: Trust to my diligence for that.—In the meantime, I'll conceal his absence from your father, or find such excuses for it, that the real cause shall never be suspected.

Maria: In attempting to save from shame, one whom we hope may yet return to virtue, to heaven and you, the judges of this action, I appeal, whether I have done anything misbecoming my sex and character.

Trueman: Earth must approve the deed, and heaven, I doubt not, will reward it.

Maria: If heaven succeed it, I am well rewarded. A virgin's fame is sullied by suspicion's slightest breath; and therefore as this must be a secret from my father and the world for Barnwell's sake; for mine, let it be so to him.

Scene IV

[Millwood's house.]

[*Discovered Lucy and Blunt.*]

Lucy: Well! what do you think of Millwood's conduct now?

Blunt: I own it is surprising. I don't know which to admire most, her feigned, or his real passion, though I have sometimes been afraid that her avarice would discover her:—But his youth and want of experience make it the easier to impose on him.

Lucy: No, it is his love. To do him justice, notwithstanding his youth, he don't want understanding; but you men are much easier imposed on in these affairs than your vanity will allow you to believe. Let me see the wisest of you all as much in love with me as Barnwell is with Millwood, and I'll engage to make as great a fool of him.

Blunt: And all circumstances considered, to make as much money of him, too.

Lucy: I can't answer for that. Her artifice in making him rob his master at first, and the various stratagems, by which she has obliged him to continue in that course, astonish even me, who know her so well.

Blunt: But then you are to consider that the money was his master's.

Lucy: There was the difficulty of it. Had it been his own, it had been nothing. Were the world his, she might have it for a smile. But these golden days are done; he's ruined, and Millwood's hopes of farther profits there are at an end.

Blunt That's no more than we all expected.

Lucy Being called by his master to make up his accounts, he was forced to quit his house and service, and wisely *flies to Millwood for relief and entertainment.*

Blunt: I have not heard of this before! How did she receive him?

Lucy: As you would expect. She wondered what he meant, was astonished at his impudence, and, with an air of modesty peculiar to herself swore so heartily that she never saw him before that she put me out of countenance

Blunt: That's much indeed! But how did Barnwell behave?

Lucy He grieved, and at length, enraged at this barbarous treatment, was preparing to be gone, and, making toward the door, showed a bag of money, which he had stolen from his master,—the last he's ever like to have from thence.

Blunt: But then Millwood?

Lucy Aye, she, with her usual address, returned to her old arts of lying, swearing, and dissembling [illegible] neck, and wept, and swore [illegible] in jest, till the easy fool, [illegible] tears, threw the money into her lap, *and swore he had rather die than think* her false.

[illegible] reconcilement ever increase love where the passion is sincere, so in him it caused so wild a transport of excessive fondness, [illegible] for hers.—Just then, when every passion with lawless anarchy prevailed, and reason was in the raging tempest lost, the cruel, artful Millwood prevailed upon the wretched youth to promise what I tremble but to think on.

Blunt: I am amazed! What can it be?

Lucy: You will be more so to hear it is to attempt the life of his nearest relation, and best benefactor.

Blunt: His uncle, whom we have often heard him speak of as a gentleman of a large estate and fair character in the country where he lives?

Lucy: The same. She was no sooner possessed of the last dear purchase of his ruin, but her avarice, insatiate as the grave, demands this horrid sacrifice, Barnwell's near relation; and unsuspected virtue must give too easy means to seize the good man's treasure, whose blood must seal the dreadful secret, and prevent the terrors of her guilty fears.

Blunt. Is it possible she could persuade him to do an act like that! He is, by nature, honest, grateful, compassionate, and generous And though his love and her artful persuasions have wrought him to practise what he most abhors; yet we all can witness for him with what reluctance he has still complied! So many tears he shed o'er each offence, as might, if possible, sanctify theft, and make a merit of a crime.

Lucy 'Tis true, at the naming the [illegible] sembled love and false endearments, *called her cruel monster, devil; and told* her she was born for his destruction She thought it not for her purpose to meet his rage with rage, but affected a most passionate fit of grief, railed at her fate, and cursed her wayward stars, that still her wants should force her to press him to act such deeds as she must needs abhor as well as he; but told him [illegible] ity had no law and love no bounds; [illegible] herefore he never truly loved, but [illegible] in her necessity to forsake her. Then kneeled and swore, that since by

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Blunt: And all circumstances considered, to make as much money of him, too.

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neck, and wept, and swore

in jest, till the easy fool,

tears, threw the money into her lap, and swore he had rather die than think her false.

Blunt: Strange infatuation!

Lucy. But what followed was stranger still. As doubts and fears followed by reconcilement ever increase love where the passion is sincere, so in him it caused so wild a transport of excessive fondness,

for hers —Just then, when every passion with lawless anarchy prevailed, and reason was in the raging tempest lost, the cruel, artful Millwood prevailed upon the wretched youth to promise what I tremble but to think on.

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Then kneeled and swore, that since by

his refusal he had given her cause to doubt his love, she never would see him more, unless, to prove it true, he robbed his uncle to supply her wants and murdered him to keep it from discovery.

Blunt: I am astonished! What said he?

Lucy: Speechless he stood; but in his face you might have read that various passions tore his very soul. Oft he in anguish threw his eyes towards heaven, and then as often bent their beams on her; then wept and groaned and beat his breast; at length, with horror not to be expressed, he cried, "Thou cursed fair! have I not given dreadful proofs of love? What drew me from my youthful innocence to stain my then unspotted soul but love? What caused me to rob my gentle master but cursed love? What makes me now a fugitive from his service, loathed by myself, and scorned by all the world, but love? What fills my eyes with tears, my soul with torture, never felt on this side death before? Why love, love, love! And why, above all, do I resolve (for, tearing his hair, he cried, I do resolve!) to kill my uncle?"

Blunt: Was she not moved? It makes me weep to hear the sad relation.

Lucy: Yes, with joy that she had gained her point. She gave him no time to cool, but urged him to attempt it instantly. He's now gone; if he performs it and escapes, there's more money for her; if not, he'll ne'er return, and then she's fairly rid of him.

Blunt: 'Tis time the world was rid of such a monster.—

Lucy: If we don't do our endeavors to prevent this murder, we are as bad as she.

Blunt: I'm afraid it is too late.

Lucy: Perhaps not. Her barbarity to Barnwell makes me hate her. We've run too great a length with her already. I did not think her or myself so wicked, as I find upon reflection we are.

Blunt: 'Tis true, we have all been too much so. But there is something so horrid in murder that all other crimes seem nothing when compared to that. I would not be involved in the guilt of that for all the world.

Lucy: Nor I, heaven knows; therefore let us clear ourselves by doing all that is in our power to prevent it. I have just thought of a way that, to me, seems probable. Will you join with me to detect this cursed design?

Blunt: With all my heart. How else shall I clear myself? He who knows of a murder intended to be committed and does not discover it in the eye of the law and reason is a murderer.

Lucy: Let us lose no time; I'll acquaint you with the particulars as we go.

Scene V

[A walk at some distance from a county seat.]

[*Enter Barnwell.*]

Barnwell: A dismal gloom obscures the face of day; either the sun has slipped behind a cloud, or journeys down the west of heaven with more than common speed to avoid the sight of what I'm doomed to act. Since I set forth on this accursed design, where'er I tread, methinks, the solid earth trembles beneath my feet. Yonder limpid stream, whose hoary fall has made a natural cascade, as I passed by, in doleful accents seemed to murmur, "Murder." The earth, the air, the water, seem concerned; but that's not strange, the world is punished, and nature feels the shock when Providence permits a good man's fall! Just heaven! Then what should I be! for him that was my father's only brother, and since his death has been to me a father, who took me up an infant, and an orphan, reared me with tenderest care, and still indulged me with most paternal fondness; yet here I stand avowed his destined murderer!—I stiffen with horror at my own impiety; 'tis yet unperformed. What if I quit my bloody purpose and fly the place! [*Going, then stops.*]—But whither, O whither, shall I fly! My master's once friendly doors are

ever shut against me; and without money Millwood will never see me more, and life is not to be endured without her! She's got such firm possession of my heart, and governs there with such despotic sway! Aye, there's the cause of all my sin and sorrow. 'Tis more than love; 'tis the fever of the soul and madness of desire. In vain does nature, reason, conscience, all oppose it; the impetuous passion bears down all before it, and drives me on to lust, to theft, and murder.—Oh conscience! feeble guide to virtue, who only shows us when we go astray, but wants the power to stop us in our course.—Ha! in yonder shady walk I see my uncle! He's alone. Now for my disguise. [*Plucks out a visor.*] This is his hour of private meditation. Thus daily he prepares his soul for heaven, whilst I—but what have I to do with heaven!—Ha! No struggles, Conscience.—

Hence! Hence remorse, and ev'ry thought that's good;
The storm that lust began must end in blood.

[*Puts on the visor, and draws a pistol.*]

SCENE VI

[A close walk in a wood.]

[*Enter Uncle.*]

Uncle: If I was superstitious, I should fear some danger lurked unseen, or death were nigh. A heavy melancholy clouds my spirits; my imagination is filled with gashly[1] forms of dreary graves, and bodies changed by death, when the pale lengthened visage attracts each weeping eye, and fills the musing soul at once with grief and horror, pity [illegible]

[illegible]

future selves, how does each inordinate [illegible]

[illegible] through the veins, fixed, still, and motionless, like the solemn object of our thoughts. We are almost at present what we must be hereafter, till curiosity awakes the soul, and sets it on inquiry.—

SCENE VII

[*Uncle; enter George Barnwell at a distance.*]

Uncle: O death, thou strange mysterious power, seen every day, yet never understood but by the incommunicative dead, what art thou? The extensive mind of man, that with a thought circles the earth's vast globe, sinks to the center, or ascends above the stars; that worlds exotic finds, or thinks it finds, thy thick clouds attempts to pass in vain; lost and bewildered in the horrid [illegible]

[illegible] *well sometimes presents the pistol, and draws it back again; at last he drops it,—at which his uncle starts, and draws his sword.*]

Barnwell: Oh, 'tis impossible!

Uncle: A man so near me, armed and masked!

Barnwell: Nay, then there's no retreat. [*Plucks a poinard from his bosom, and stabs him.*]

Uncle: Oh! I am slain! All gracious heaven, regard the prayer of thy dying servant! Bless with thy choicest blessings my dearest nephew, forgive my murderer, and take my fleeting soul to endless mercy. [*Barnwell throws off his mask, runs to him, and, kneeling by him, raises and chafes him.*]

Barnwell: Expiring saint! Oh, murdered, martyred uncle! Lift up your dying eyes, and view your nephew in your murderer. O do not look so tenderly upon me! Let indignation lighten from your eyes, and blast me ere you die. By heaven, he weeps in [illegible]

[1] Ghastly.

woes. Tears, tears, for blood! The murdered, in the agonies of death, weeps for his murderer! O, speak your pious purpose, pronounce my pardon then, and take me with you!—He would, but cannot. O why, with such fond affection do you press my murdering hand!—What! will you kiss me! [*Kisses him.—Uncle groans and dies.*] He's gone forever, and oh! I follow.—[*Swoons away upon his uncle's dead body.*] Do I still live to press the suffering bosom of the earth? Do I still breathe, and taint with my infectious breath the wholesome air? Let heaven, from its high throne, in justice or in mercy, now look down on that dear murdered saint, and me the murderer. And, if his vengeance spares, let pity strike and end my wretched being.—Murder the worst of crimes, and parricide the worst of murders, and this the worst of parricides! Cain, who stands on record from the birth of time, and must to its last final period, as accursed, slew a brother favored above him. Detested Nero, by another's hand, dispatched a mother, that he feared and hated. But I, with my own hand, have murdered a brother, mother, father, and a friend; most loving and beloved. This execrable act of mine's without a parallel.—O may it ever stand alone!—the last of murders, as it is the worst.—

The rich man thus, in torment and despair,
Preferred his vain, but charitable prayer.
The fool, his own soul lost, would fain be wise
For others' good; but heaven his suit denies.
By laws and means well known we stand or fall,
And one eternal rule remains for all.

QUESTIONS ON ACT III

1. Would there be any advantage, from the point of view of play construction, of having Barnwell murder Thorowgood, whom the reader knows, instead of an unknown uncle? Would this justify giving the victim the amount of space the uncle has in Scenes vi and vii?

2. Is the Lucy-Blunt dialogue in Scene iv a piece of subtle and well-managed exposition?

3. What is the effect of Blunt's last speech in Scene iv? Does such a plan of action make for tragic or melodramatic effects?

4. In Scene v, what is the effect of Barnwell's speaking of himself in such terms as "doomed" to commit murder? Of his deciding to go on with the murder because he has nowhere to go?

5. Compare Barnwell's dropping the gun in Scene vii with Lady Windermere's dropping the fan in Act II of Wilde's play. Which is more dramatically effective? Why?

6. How relevant is Scene i?

7. Does Scene iv suggest to you any dramatic possibilities that Lillo missed?

8. Is there any motivation for Millwood's demanding the "horrid sacrifice" that we learn about in Scene iv?

ACT IV

Scene I

[Thorowgood's house.]

[*Enter Maria.*]

Maria: How falsely do they judge who censure or applaud, as we're afflicted or rewarded here! I know I am unhappy, yet cannot charge myself with any crime more than the common frailties of our kind that should provoke just heaven to mark me out for sufferings so uncommon and severe. Falsely to accuse ourselves, heaven must abhor; then it is just and right that innocence should suffer, for heaven must be just in all its ways. Perhaps by that they are kept from moral evils, much worse than penal, or more improved in virtue; or may not the lesser ills that they sustain, be the means of greater good to others? Might all the joyless days and sleepless nights that I have passed, but purchase peace for thee—

Thou dear, dear cause of all my grief and pain,
Small were the loss, and infinite the.
Tho' to the grave in secret love I
So life, and fame, and happiness were thine. [*Enter Trueman.*]

Scene II

[*Trueman and Maria.*]

Maria: What news of Barnwell?

Trueman: None.—I have sought him with the greatest diligence, but all in vain.

Maria: Doth my father yet suspect the cause of his absenting himself?

Trueman: All appeared so just and fair to him, it is not possible he ever should; but his absence will no longer be concealed Your father's wise; and though he seems to hearken to the friendly excuses, I would make for Barnwell, yet, I am afraid, he regards 'em only as such, without suffering them to influence his judgment.

Maria: How does the unhappy youth defeat all our designs to serve him! Yet I can never repent what we have done. Should he return, 'twill make his reconciliation with my father easier, and preserve him from future reproach from a malicious, unforgiving world.

Scene III

[*Enter to them Thorowgood and Lucy.*]

Thorowgood: This woman here has given me a sad, (and bating some circumstances) too probable account of Barnwell's defection.

Lucy: I am sorry, sir, that my frank confession of my former unhappy course of life should cause you to suspect my truth on this occasion.

Thorowgood: It is not that; your confession has in it all the appearance of truth. [*To them.*] Among many other particulars, she informs me that Barnwell had been influenced to break his trust, and wrong me, at several times, of considerable sums of money; now, as I [illegible]

[illegible]

attempts to save him.—Poor ruined Barnwell!—Wretched lost Maria!— [*Exit Maria.*]

Scene IV

[*Thorowgood, Trueman and Lucy.*]

Thorowgood How am I distressed on every side! Pity for that unhappy youth, fear for the life of a much valued friend —and then my child—the only joy and hope of my declining life. Her melancholy increases hourly and gives me [illegible]

[illegible] pious woman, is gone to rob and murder his venerable uncle.

Trueman: O execrable deed! I am blasted with the horror of the thought.

Lucy: This delay may ruin all.

Thorowgood: What to do or think I know not; that he ever wronged me, I know is false; the rest may be so too, there's all my hope.

Trueman: Trust not to that, rather suppose all true than lose a moment's time; even now the horrid deed may be a-doing—dreadful imagination! or it may be done, and we are vainly debating on the means to prevent what is already past.

Thorowgood: [*Aside.*] This earnestness convinces me that he knows more than he has yet discovered. What ho! Without there! who waits?

SCENE V

[*Enter to them a Servant.*]

Thorowgood: Order the groom to saddle the swiftest horse, and prepare himself to set out with speed. An affair of life and death demands his diligence. [*Exit Servant.*]

SCENE VI

[*Thorowgood, Trueman and Lucy.*]

Thorowgood: For you, whose behavior on this occasion I have no time to commend as it deserves, I must engage your farther assistance.—Return and observe this Millwood till I come. I have your directions, and will follow you as soon as possible. [*Exit Lucy.*]

SCENE VII

[*Thorowgood and Trueman.*]

Thorowgood: Trueman, you, I am sure, would not be idle on this occasion. [*Exit Thorowgood.*]

SCENE VIII

[*Trueman.*]

Trueman: He only who is a friend can judge of my distress. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IX

[Millwood's house.]

[*Enter Millwood.*]

Millwood: I wish I knew the event of his design; the attempt without success would ruin him. Well! what have I to apprehend from that? I fear too much. The mischief being only intended, his friends, in pity of his youth, turn all their rage on me. I should have thought of that before. Suppose the deed done; then, and then only, I shall be secure; or what if he returns without attempting it at all?

SCENE X

[*Millwood, and Barnwell bloody.*]

Millwood: But he is here, and I have done him wrong; his bloody hands show he has done the deed, but show he wants the prudence to conceal it.

Barnwell: Where shall I hide me? Whither shall I fly to avoid the swift unerring hand of justice?

Millwood: Dismiss those fears; though thousands had pursued you to the door, yet being entered here, you are safe as innocence; I have such a cavern, by art so cunningly contrived, that the piercing eyes of jealousy and revenge may search in vain, nor find the entrance to the safe retreat. There will I hide you if any danger's near.

Barnwell: O hide me from myself if it be possible, for while I bear my conscience in my bosom, tho' I were hid where man's eye never saw, nor light e'er dawned, 'twere all in vain. For that inmate, that impartial judge, will try, convict, and sentence me for murder; and execute me with never-ending torments. Behold these hands all crimsoned o'er with my dear uncle's blood! Here's a sight to make a statue start with horror or turn a living man into a statue.

Millwood: Ridiculous! Then it seems you are afraid of your own shadow; or

what's less than a shadow, your conscience.

Barnwell: Though to man unknown I did the accursed act, what can we hide [illegible]

[illegible]

or what advantage may yet be made of it? Did you secure the keys of his treasure? Those no doubt were about him? What gold, what jewels, or what else of value have you brought me?

Barnwell: Think you I added sacrilege to murder? Oh! had you seen him as his [illegible] *alas, alas! he knew not then that his* nephew was his murderer; how would you have wished as I did, tho' you had a thousand years of life to come, to have given them all to have lengthened his one hour. But being dead, I fled the sight of what my hands had done, nor could I, to have gained the empire of the world, have violated by theft his sacred corpse.

Millwood: Whining preposterous canting villain! to murder your uncle, rob him of life, nature's first, last, dear prerogative, after which there's no injury—then fear to take what he no longer wanted! and bring to me your penury and guilt. Do you think I'll hazard my reputation, nay my life, to entertain you?

Barnwell: Oh!—Millwood!—This from thee?—But I have done, if you hate me, if you wish me dead; then are you happy,—for oh! 'tis sure my grief will quickly end me.

Millwood: [*Aside.*] In his madness he will discover all, and involve me in his ruin; we are on a precipice from whence there's no retreat for both —Then to preserve myself—[*Pauses.*] There is no other way;—'tis dreadful, but reflection comes too late when danger's pressing, and there's no room for choice. It must be done. [*Stamps.*]

SCENE XI

[*Enter to them a Servant.*]

Millwood: Fetch me an officer and seize this villain; he has confessed himself a murderer. Should I let him escape, I justly might be thought as bad as he. [*Exit Servant.*]

SCENE XII

[*Millwood and Barnwell.*]

Barnwell: O Millwood! sure thou dost [illegible] *will this instant deliver myself into the* hands of justice; indeed I will, for death is all I wish But thy ingratitude so tears my wounded soul, 'tis worse ten thousand times than death with torture!

Millwood: Call it what you will, I am willing to live; and live secure; which nothing but your death can warrant.

Barnwell: If there be a pitch of wickedness that seats the author beyond the reach of vengeance, you must be secure. But what remains for me but a dismal dungeon, hard-galling fetters, an awful trial, and ignominious death, justly to fall unpitied and abhorred?—After death to be suspended between heaven and earth, a dreadful spectacle, the warning and horror of a gaping crowd. This I could bear, nay wish not to avoid, had it but come from any hand but thine.—[*Enter Blunt, Officer and Attendants.*]

SCENE XIII

[*Millwood, Barnwell, Blunt, Officer and Attendants.*]

Millwood: Heaven defend me! Conceal a murderer! Here, sir, take this youth into your custody, I accuse him of murder and will appear to make good my charge. [*They seize him.*]

Barnwell: To whom, of what, or how shall I complain? I'll not accuse her; the

hand of heaven is in it, and this, the punishment of lust and parricide! Yet heaven, that justly cuts me off, still suffers her to live, perhaps to punish others. Tremendous mercy! So friends are cursed with immortality to be the executioners of heaven—

Be warned, ye youths, who see my sad despair,
Avoid lewd women, false as they are fair;
By reason guided, honest joys pursue;
The fair, to honor, and to virtue true,
Just to herself, will ne'er be false to you.
By my example learn to shun my fate,
(How wretched is the man who's wise too late!)
Ere innocence, and fame, and life be lost,
Here purchase wisdom cheaply, at my cost. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XIV

[*Manent Millwood and Blunt.*]

Millwood: Where's Lucy? Why is she absent at such a time?

Blunt: Would I had been so too, thou devil!

Millwood: Insolent! This to me?

Blunt: The worst that we know of the devil is, that he first seduces to sin, and then betrays to punishment. [*Exit Blunt.*]

SCENE XV

[*Millwood.*]

Millwood: They disapprove of my conduct, and mean to take this opportunity to set up for themselves. My ruin is resolved; I see my danger, but scorn both it and them. I was not born to fall by such weak instruments. [*Enter Thorowgood.*]

SCENE XVI

[*Thorowgood and Millwood.*]

Thorowgood: Where is the scandal of her own sex, and curse of ours?

Millwood: What means this insolence? Who do you seek?

Thorowgood: Millwood.

Millwood: Well, you have found her then. I am Millwood.

Thorowgood: Then you are the most impious wretch that e'er the sun beheld.

Millwood: From your appearance I should have expected wisdom and moderation, but your manners belie your aspect. What is your business here? I know you not.

Thorowgood: Hereafter you may know me better; I am Barnwell's master.

Millwood: Then you are master to a villain, which, I think, is not much to your credit.

Thorowgood: Had he been as much above thy arts as my credit is superior to thy malice, I need not blush to own him.

Millwood: My arts? I don't understand you, sir! If he has done amiss, what's that to me? Was he my servant, or yours? You should have taught him better.

Thorowgood: Why should I wonder to find such uncommon impudence in one arrived to such a height of wickedness! When innocence is banished, modesty soon follows. Know, sorceress, I'm not ignorant of any of your arts by which you first deceived the unwary youth. I know how, step by step, you've led him on, reluctant and unwilling, from crime to crime to this last horrid act which you contrived and by your cursed wiles even forced him to commit, and then betrayed him.

Millwood: [*Aside.*] Ha! Lucy has got the advantage of me, and accused me first; unless I can turn the accusation, and fix it upon her and Blunt, I am lost.

Thorowgood: Had I known your cruel design sooner, it had been prevented. To see you punished as the law directs, is all that now remains. Poor satisfaction, for he, innocent as he is compared to you, must suffer too. But heaven, who knows our frame, and graciously distinguishes between frailty and presumption, will make a difference, though man cannot, who sees not the heart, but only judges by the outward action.

Millwood: I find, sir, we are both unhappy in our servants. I was surprised at such ill treatment, from a gentleman of your appearance without cause, and therefore too hastily returned it, for which I ask your pardon. I now perceive you have been so far imposed on, as to think me engaged in a former correspondence with your servant, and, some way or other, accessory to his undoing.

Thorowgood: I charge you as the cause, the sole cause of all his guilt, and all his suffering, of all he now endures, *and must endure,* till a violent and shameful death shall put a dreadful period to his life and miseries together.

Millwood: 'Tis very strange; but who's secure from scandal and detraction? So far from contributing to his ruin, I never spoke to him till since that fatal accident, which I lament as much as you 'Tis true, I have a servant, on whose account he has of late frequented my house; if she has abused my good opinion of her, am I to blame? Hasn't Barnwell done the same by you?

Thorowgood: I hear you; pray go on.

Millwood: I have been informed he had a violent passion for her, and she for him; but I always thought it innocent, I know her poor and given to expensive pleasures. Now who can tell but she may have influenced the amorous [illegible] confirm it. I'll have her and a man servant that I suspect as an accomplice, secured immediately. I hope, sir, you will lay aside your ill-grounded suspicions of me, and join to punish the real contrivers of this bloody deed. [*Offers to go.*]

Thorowgood: Madam, you pass not *this way. I see your design, but shall* protect them from your malice.

Millwood: I hope you will not use your influence and the credit of your name to screen such guilty wretches. Consider, sir, the wickedness of persuading a thoughtless youth to such a crime.

Thorowgood: I do, and of betraying him when it was done.

Millwood: That which you call betraying him, may convince you of my innocence. She who loves him, though she contrived the murder, would never have delivered him into the hands of *justice, as I, struck with the horror of his* crimes, have done.

Thorowgood: [*Aside.*] How should an unexperienced youth escape her snares? The powerful magic of her wit and form might betray the wisest to simple dotage and fire the blood that age had froze long since. Even I, that with just prejudice came prepared, had, by her artful story, been deceived, but that my strong conviction of her guilt makes even a doubt impossible —Those whom subtly you would accuse, you know are your accusers; and what proves unanswerably, their innocence, and your guilt—they accused you before the deed was done, and did all that was in their power to have prevented it.

Millwood: Sir, you are very hard to be convinced; but I have such a proof, which, when produced, will silence all objections [*Exit.*]

SCENE XVII

[*Thorowgood, and enter Lucy, Trueman, Blunt, Officers, &c.*]

Lucy: Gentlemen, pray place yourselves, some on one side of that door, and some on the other, watch her entrance, and act as your prudence shall direct you.—This way—[*to Thorowgood*] and note her behavior, I have observed her, she's driven to the last extremity, and is forming some desperate resolution.—I guess at her design.—

SCENE XVIII

[*Enter to them, Millwood with a pistol,—Trueman secures her.*]

Trueman: Here thy power of doing mischief ends, deceitful, cruel, bloody woman!

Millwood: Fool, hypocrite, villain!—Man! thou can'st not call me that.

Trueman: To call thee woman were to wrong the sex, thou devil!

Millwood: That imaginary being is an emblem of thy cursed sex collected. A mirror, wherein each particular man may see his own likeness and that of all mankind!

Trueman: Think not, by aggravating the fault of others, to extenuate thy own, of which the abuse of such uncommon perfections of mind and body is not the least.

Millwood: If such I had, well may I curse your barbarous sex, who robbed me of 'em, ere I knew their worth, then left me, too late, to count their value by their loss! Another and another spoiler came, and all my gain was poverty and reproach. My soul disdained, and yet disdains, dependence and contempt. Riches, no matter by what means obtained, I saw, secured the worst of men from both; I found it therefore necessary to be rich; and, to that end, I summoned all my arts. You call 'em wicked; be it so, they were such as my conversation with your sex had furnished me withal.

Thorowgood: Sure none but the worst of men conversed with thee.

Millwood: Men of all degrees and all professions I have known, yet found no difference, but in their several capacities; all were alike wicked to the utmost of their power. In pride, contention, avarice, cruelty, and revenge, the reverend priesthood were my unerring guides. From suburb-magistrates, who live by ruined reputations, as the unhospitable natives of Cornwall do by shipwrecks, I learned that to charge my innocent neighbors with my crimes was to merit their protection; for to screen the guilty, is the less scandalous, when many are suspected, and detraction, like darkness and death, blackens all objects and levels all distinction. Such are your venal magistrates, who favor none but such as, by their office, they are sworn to punish. With them, not to be guilty is the worst of crimes; and large fees privately paid is every needful virtue.

Thorowgood: Your practice has sufficiently discovered your contempt of laws, both human and divine; no wonder then that you should hate the officers of both.

Millwood: I hate you all, I know you, and expect no mercy; nay, I ask for none; I have done nothing that I am sorry for; I followed my inclinations and that the best of you does every day. All actions are alike natural and indifferent to man and beast, who devour, or are devoured, as they meet with others weaker or stronger than themselves.

Thorowgood: What pity it is, a mind so comprehensive, daring and inquisitive, should be a stranger to religion's sweet, but powerful charms.

Millwood: I am not fool enough to be an atheist, though I have known enough of men's hypocrisy to make a thousand simple women so. Whatever religion is in itself, as practised by mankind, it has caused the evils you say it was designed to cure. War, plague, and famine have not destroyed so many of the human race, as this pretended piety has done, and with such barbarous cruelty, as if the only way to honor heaven were to turn the present world into hell.

Thorowgood: Truth is truth, though from an enemy and spoke in malice. You bloody, blind, and superstitious bigots, how will you answer this?

Millwood: What are your laws, of which you make your boast, but the fool's wisdom and the coward's valor; the instrument and screen of all your villainies, by which you punish in others what you act yourselves, or would have acted, had you been in their circumstances? The judge who condemns the poor man for being a thief had been a thief himself had he been poor. Thus you go on deceiving and being deceived, harassing, plaguing, and destroying one another; but women are your universal prey.

Women, by whom you are, the source of joy,
With cruel arts you labor to destroy.
A thousand ways our ruin you pursue,
Yet blame in us those arts, first taught by you.
O may, from hence, each violated maid,
By flattering, faithless, barb'rous man betrayed;
When robbed of innocence and virgin fame
From your destruction raise a nobler name;
To right their sex's wrongs devote their mind,
And future Millwoods prove to plague mankind.

QUESTIONS ON ACT IV

1. The striking thing about Scene x is the irony; there is a relatively small amount of direct homily. Does Lillo serve his purpose, which is to teach a lesson, more or less effectively in this scene?
2. Comment on Thorowgood's first speech in Scene xvi.
3. How dramatic is the soliloquy in Scene i?
4. Point out the irony in Scene ii. Is it effective?
5.
6

may

purpose, how well does he succeed?

7. Is Lillo on the right track in Barnwell's speech in Scene xiii?
8. In Scene xviii Lillo is about as far as possible from tragic effect. Study the scene with care. What is wrong with the various speeches of Thorowgood, especially the last?

ACT V

Scene I

[A room in a prison.]

[*Enter Thorowgood, Blunt and Lucy.*]

Thorowgood: I have recommended to Barnwell a reverend divine whose judgment and integrity I am well acquainted with; nor has Millwood been neglected, but she, unhappy woman, still obstinate, refuses his assistance.

Lucy: This pious charity to the afflicted well becomes your character; yet pardon me, sir, if I wonder you were not at their trial.

Th

have been present would have aggravated our sorrows without relieving his.

Blunt: It was mournful, indeed. Barnwell's youth and modest deportment as he passed drew tears from every eye. When placed at the bar and arraigned before the reverend judges, with many tears and interrupting sobs he confessed and aggravated his offences, without accusing, or once reflecting on, Millwood, the shameless author of his ruin, who, dauntless and unconcerned, stood by his side, viewing with visible pride and contempt the vast assembly, who all with sympathizing sorrow wept for the wretched youth. Millwood, when called upon to answer, loudly insisted upon her innocence, and made an artful and a bold defence; but finding all in vain, the impartial jury and the learned

that avail? She was condemned, and is this day to suffer with him.

Thorowgood: The time draws on; I am

going to visit Barnwell, as you are Millwood.

Lucy: We have not wronged her, yet I dread this interview. She's proud, impatient, wrathful, and unforgiving. To be the branded instruments of vengeance, to suffer in her shame, and sympathize with her in all she suffers, is the tribute we must pay for our former ill-spent lives, and long confederacy with her in wickedness.

Thorowgood: Happy for you it ended when it did. What you have done against Millwood, I know, proceeded from a just abhorrence of her crimes, free from interest, malice, or revenge. Proselytes to virtue should be encouraged. Pursue your proposed reformation, and know me hereafter for your friend.

Lucy: This is a blessing as unhoped for as unmerited, but heaven, that snatched us from impending ruin, sure intends you as its instrument to secure us from apostasy.

Thorowgood: With gratitude to impute your deliverance to heaven is just. Many, less virtuously disposed than Barnwell was, have never fallen in the manner he has done,—may not such owe their safety rather to Providence than to themselves? With pity and compassion let us judge him. Great were his faults, but strong was the temptation. Let his ruin learn us diffidence, humanity and circumspection; for we, who wonder at his fate, perhaps had we like him, been tried,—like him, we had fallen, too.

SCENE II

[A dungeon, a table and lamp.]

[*Enter Thorowgood, to Barnwell reading.*]

Thorowgood: See there the bitter fruits of passion's detested reign and sensual appetite indulged. Severe reflections, penitence, and tears!

Barnwell: [*Rising.*] My honored, injured master, whose goodness has covered me a thousand times with shame, forgive this last unwilling disrespect,—indeed I saw you not.

Thorowgood: 'Tis well. I hope you were better employed in viewing of yourself; your journey's long, your time for preparation almost spent. I sent a reverend divine to teach you to improve it and should be glad to hear of his success.

Barnwell: The word of truth, which he recommended for my constant companion in this my sad retirement, has at length removed the doubts I labored under. From thence I've learned the infinite extent of heavenly mercy; that my offences, though great, are not unpardonable; and that 'tis not my interest only, but my duty, to believe and to rejoice in that hope. So shall heaven receive the glory, and future penitents the profit of my example.

Thorowgood: Go on. How happy am I who live to see this!

Barnwell: 'Tis wonderful that words should charm despair, speak peace and pardon to a murderer's conscience; but truth and mercy flow in every sentence, attended with force and energy divine. How shall I describe my present state of mind? I hope in doubt, and trembling I rejoice. I feel my grief increase, even as my fears give way. Joy and gratitude now supply more tears than the horror and anguish of despair before.

Thorowgood: These are the genuine signs of true repentance, the only preparatory, certain way to everlasting peace. O the joy it gives to see a soul formed and prepared for heaven! For this the faithful minister devotes himself to meditation, abstinence, and prayer, shunning the vain delights of sensual joys, and daily dies that others may live forever. For this he turns the sacred volumes o'er, and spends his life in painful search of truth. The love of riches and the lust of power, he looks on with just contempt and detestation; who only counts for wealth the souls he wins, and whose highest ambition is to serve mankind. If the reward of all his pains be to preserve one soul from wandering

or turn one from the error of his ways, how does he then rejoice and own his little labors over-paid!

[illegible]

Thorowgood: To see thee thus is joy too great for words. Farewell! Heaven strengthen thee! Farewell!

Barnwell: Oh, sir, there's something I [illegible] try.

Barnwell: I had a friend ('tis true I am unworthy) yet methinks your generous example might persuade—could I not see him once before I go from whence there's no return?

Thorowgood: He's coming, and as much thy friend as ever; but I'll not anticipate his sorrow. [*Aside.*] Too soon he'll see the sad effect of his contagious ruin. This torrent of domestic misery bears too hard upon me; I must retire to indulge a weakness I find impossible to overcome.—Much loved—and much lamented youth,—farewell! Heaven strengthen thee! Eternally farewell!

Barnwell: The best of masters and of men, farewell—While I live, let me not want your prayers!

Thorowgood: Thou shalt not;—thy peace being made with Heaven, death's already vanquished; bear a little longer the pains that attend this transitory life, and cease from pain forever. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III

[*Barnwell.*]

Barnwell: I find a power within that bears my soul above the fears of death, and, spite of conscious shame and guilt, gives me a taste of pleasure more than mortal.

SCENE IV

[*Enter to him Trueman and Keeper.*]

Keeper: Sir, there's the prisoner. [*Exit.*]

SCENE V

[*Barnwell and Trueman.*]

Barnwell: Trueman,—my friend, whom I so wished to see, yet now he's here I dare not look upon him. [*Weeps.*]

Trueman: O Barnwell! Barnwell!

Barnwell. Mercy! Mercy! gracious [illegible] given me! But oh! to see thee thus!

Barnwell: I know it is dreadful! I feel the anguish of thy generous soul,—but I was born to murder all who love me. [*Both weep.*]

Trueman: I came not to reproach you;—I thought to bring you comfort,—but I'm deceived, for I have none to give;—I came to share thy sorrow, but cannot bear my own.

Barnwell: My sense of guilt, indeed, you cannot know; 'tis what the good and innocent like you can ne'er conceive; but other griefs at present I have none but what I feel for you. In your sorrow I read you love me still, but yet methinks 'tis strange, when I consider what I am.

Trueman. No more of that. I can remember nothing but thy virtue, thy honest, tender friendship, our former happy state and present misery. O had you trusted me when first the fair seducer tempted you, all might have been prevented!

Barnwell. Alas, thou know'st not what a wretch I've been! Breach of friendship was my first and least offence. So far was I lost to goodness,—so devoted to the author of my ruin,—that had she insisted on my murdering thee,—I think,—I should have done it.

Trueman: Prithee, aggravate thy faults no more.

Barnwell: I think I should! Thus good and generous as you are, I should have murdered you!

Trueman: We have not yet embraced,

and may be interrupted. Come to my arms.

Barnwell: Never, never will I taste such joys on earth; never will I so soothe my just remorse. Are those honest arms and faithful bosom fit to embrace and to support a murderer? These iron fetters only shall clasp and flinty pavement bear me. [*Throwing himself on the ground.*] Even these too good for such a bloody monster!

Trueman: Shall fortune sever those whom friendship joined! Thy miseries cannot lay thee so low, but love will find thee. [*Lies down by him.*] Upon this rugged couch then let us lie, for well it suits our most deplorable condition. Here will we offer to stern calamity, this earth the altar, and ourselves the sacrifice. Our mutual groans shall echo to each other through the dreary vault. Our sighs shall number the moments as they pass,—and mingling tears communicate such anguish as words were never made to express.

Barnwell: Then be it so. Since you propose an intercourse of woe, pour all your griefs into my breast,—and in exchange take mine. [*Embracing.*] Where's now the anguish that you promised? You've taken mine, and make me no return.—Sure peace and comfort dwell within these arms, and sorrow can't approach me while I'm here! This, too, is the work of Heaven, who, having before spoke peace and pardon to me, now sends thee to confirm it. O take, take some of the joy that overflows my breast!

Trueman: I do, I do. Almighty Power, how have you made us capable to bear, at once, the extremes of pleasure and pain?

Scene VI

[*Enter to them, Keeper.*]

Keeper: Sir.

Trueman: I come. [*Exit Keeper.*]

Scene VII

[*Barnwell and Trueman.*]

Barnwell: Must you leave me? Death would soon have parted us forever.

Trueman: O, my Barnwell, there's yet another task behind:—Again your heart must bleed for others' woes.

Barnwell: To meet and part with you, I thought was all I had to do on earth! What is there more for me to do or suffer?

Trueman: I dread to tell thee, yet it must be known.—Maria—

Barnwell: Our master's fair and virtuous daughter!

Trueman: The same.

Barnwell: No misfortune, I hope, has reached that lovely maid! Preserve her, Heaven, from every ill, to show mankind that goodness is your care.

Trueman: Thy, thy misfortunes, my unhappy friend, have reached her. Whatever you and I have felt, and more, if more be possible, she feels for you.

Barnwell: [*Aside.*] I know he doth abhor a lie, and would not trifle with his dying friend.—This is, indeed, the bitterness of death!

Trueman: You must remember, for we all observed it, for some time past, a heavy melancholy weighed her down. Disconsolate she seemed, and pined and languished from a cause unknown; till hearing of your dreadful fate, the lon- stifled flame blazed out. She wept, wrung her hands, and tore her hair, in the transport of her grief discove her own lost state, whilst she lament yours.

Barnwell: Will all the pain I feel r store thy ease, lovely unhappy maid [*Weeping.*] Why didn't you let me d and never know it?

Trueman: It was impossible; s makes no secret of her passion for yo and is determined to see you ere you d She waits for me to introduce he [*Exit.*]

Scene VIII

[*Barnwell.*]

Barnwell: Vain busy thoughts be still! What avails it to think on what I might have been I now am what I've made myself.

Scene IX

[*Enter to him, Trueman and Maria*]

Trueman. Madam, reluctant I lead you to this dismal scene. This is the seat of misery and guilt. Here awful justice reserves her public victims. This is the entrance to shameful death.

Maria: To this sad place, then, no improper guest, the abandoned, lost Maria brings despair, and see! the subject and the cause of all this world of woe! Silent and motionless he stands, as if his soul had quitted her abode, and the lifeless form alone was left behind, yet that so perfect, that beauty and death, ever at enmity, now seem united there.

Barnwell: I groan, but murmur not. Just Heaven, I am your own; do with me what you please.

Maria: Why are your streaming eyes still fixed below as though thou'dst give the greedy earth thy sorrows, and rob me of my due? Were happiness within your power, you should bestow it where you please; but in your misery I must and will partake.

Barnwell: Oh! say not so, but fly, abhor, and leave me to my fate Consider what you are! How vast your fortune, and how bright your fame! Have pity on your youth, your beauty, and unequalled virtue, for which so many noble peers have sighed in vain. Bless with your charms some honorable lord. Adorn with your beauty; and, by your example, improve the English court, that justly claims such merits; so shall I quickly be to you as though I had never been.

Maria: When I forget you, I must be so, indeed. Reason, choice, virtue, all forbid it. Let women like Millwood if there be more such women smile in prosperity and in adversity forsake. Be it the pride of virtue to repair or to partake the ruin such have made.

Trueman: Lovely, ill-fated maid! Was there ever such generous distress before? How must this pierce his [illegible]

[illegible] youthful hopes were at the highest; if then to have raised my thoughts to you, had been presumption in me, never to have been pardoned, think how much beneath yourself you condescend to regard me now.

Maria: Let her blush, who, professing love, invades the freedom of your sex's choice and meanly sues in hopes of a return Your inevitable fate hath rendered hope impossible as vain Then why should I fear to avow a passion so just and so disinterested?

Trueman. If any should take occasion from Millwood's crimes to libel the best and fairest part of the creation, here let them see their error The most distant hopes of such a tender passion from so bright a maid might add to the happiness of the most happy and make the greatest proud. Yet here 'tis lavished in vain. Though by the rich present the generous donor is undone, he on whom it is bestowed receives no benefit.

Barnwell. So the aromatic spices of the East, which all the living covet and esteem, are with unavailing kindness wasted on the dead.

Maria. Yes, fruitless is my love, and [illegible] is her misery and distress, who sees the first last object of her love, for whom alone she'd live, for whom she'd die a thousand, thousand deaths if it were possible, expiring in her arms? Yet she is happy, when compared to me Were millions of worlds mine, I'd gladly give

them in exchange for her condition. The most consummate woe is light to mine. The last of curses to other miserable maids, is all I ask; and that's denied me.

Trueman: Time and reflection cure all ills.

Maria: All but this; his dreadful catastrophe virtue herself abhors. To give a holiday to suburb slaves; and, passing, entertain the savage herd who, elbowing each other for a sight, pursue and press upon him like his fate. A mind with piety and resolution armed may smile on death. But public ignominy! everlasting shame! shame the death of souls! to die a thousand times and yet survive even death itself, in never-dying infamy, is this to be endured? Can I, who live in him, and must each hour of my devoted life feel all these woes renewed, can I endure this!—

Trueman: Grief has impaired her spirits; she pants, as in the agonies of death.

Barnwell: Preserve her, Heaven, and restore her peace,—nor let her death be added to my crime,—[*Bell tolls.*] I am summoned to my fate.

SCENE X

[*Enter to them, Keeper.*]

Keeper: The officers attend you, sir. Mrs. Millwood is already summoned.

Barnwell: Tell 'em I'm ready. And now, my friend, farewell. [*Embracing.*] Support and comfort the best you can this mourning fair. No more. Forget not to pray for me. [*Turning to Maria.*] Would you, bright excellence, permit me the honor of a chaste embrace, the last happiness this world could give were mine. [*She inclines towards him; they embrace.*] Exalted goodness! O turn your eyes from earth and me to heaven, where virtue like yours is ever heard. Pray for the peace of my departing soul. —Early my race of wickedness began, and soon has reached the summit, ere nature has finished her work, and stamped me man. Just at the time that others begin to stray, my course is finished! Though short my span of life, and few my days, yet count my crimes for years, and I have lived whole ages. Justice and mercy are in heaven the same. Its utmost severity is mercy to the whole, thereby to cure man's folly and presumption, which else would render even infinite mercy vain and ineffectual. Thus justice in compassion to mankind cuts off a wretch like me,—by one such example to secure thousands from future ruin.

If any youth, like you, in future times,
Shall mourn my fate, though he abhor my crimes;
Or tender maid, like you, my tale shall hear,
And to my sorrow gives a pitying tear:
To each such melting eye, and throbbing heart,
Would gracious heaven this benefit impart,
Never to know my guilt, nor feel my pain;
Then must you own, you ought not to complain;
Since you nor weep, nor shall I die, in vain.

[*Exeunt Keeper and Barnwell.*]

SCENE XI

[*Trueman, Blunt and Lucy.*]

Lucy: Heart-breaking sight! O wretched, wretched Millwood!

Trueman: You came from her then—how is she disposed to meet her Fate?

Blunt: Who can describe unalterable woe?

Lucy: She goes to death encompassed with horror, loathing life, and yet afraid to die; no tongue can tell her anguish and despair.

Trueman: Heaven be better to her than her fears; may she prove a warning to others, a monument of mercy in herself.

Lucy: O sorrow insupportable! Break, break, my heart!

Trueman: In vain
With bleeding hearts and weeping eyes we show
A human gen'rous sense of others' woe;
Unless we mark what drew their ruin on,
And by avoiding that, prevent our own.

EPILOGUE

Written by *Colley Cibber, Esq.;* and Spoken by *Maria*

Since Fate has robbed me of the hopeless youth,
For whom my heart had hoarded up its truth;
By all the laws of love and honor, now,
I'm free again to choose,—and one of you

But soft! With caution first I'll round me peep;
Maids, in my case, should look before they leap:
Here's choice enough, of various sorts, and hue,
The cit, the wit, the rake cocked up in cue,
The fair spruce mercer, and the tawny Jew.

Suppose I search the sober gallery. No,
There's none but prentices,—and cuckolds all a row,
And these, I doubt, are those that make 'em so.
[*Points to the boxes*]

'Tis very well, enjoy the jest. But you,
Fine powdered sparks, nay, I'm told 'tis true,
Your happy spouses—can make cuckolds too

'Twixt you and them, the diff'rence this perhaps,
The cit's ashamed whene'er his duck he traps,
But you, when madam's tripping, let her fall,
Cock up your hats, and take no shame at all

What if some savored poet I could meet?
Whose love would lay his laurels at my feet?
No,—painted passion real love abhors,—
His flame would prove the suit of creditors.

Not to detain you then with longer pause,
In short, my heart to this conclusion draws,
I yield it to the hand, that's loudest in applause.

QUESTIONS ON ACT V

1. Note the large number of satisfying emotional exercises Barnwell is able to engage in in Act V. How does this fact influence the tragic tone?

2. It has been said that Act V really rewards the criminal, that it is likely to stimulate people to desire to spend their last days in jail. At what aspects of the Act is such a criticism aimed?

3. In Scene ix, what is wrong with Maria's saying, "Let women like Millwood . . . smile in prosperity, etc."?

4. In Scene ii Barnwell reappears for the first time since Act IV. xiii. Is his reappearance dramatic?

5. Analyze the source of the sentimentality of Barnwell's last speech in Scene v.

NOTES ON *THE LONDON MERCHANT*

Before we have finished reading the play we become aware of two things: that Lillo is trying to write a tragedy, and that it is not successful. We realize, of course, that he does improve on the murder-mystery melodrama (in Appendix A, Exercises on Additional Plays, the student will find an analysis of a play of this type, Morton's *Speed the Plough*); for Lillo's play does attempt to deal with character. On the other hand, it definitely falls short of such well-known English tragedies as Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which appeared more than a century earlier, but with which it may be compared in that the leading characters in all of these plays go down in pursuit of something that they cannot morally attain. But, whereas Marlowe and Shakespeare move us strongly, Lillo leaves us indifferent and, at times, even amused or annoyed. Our business is to find out why.

I. LACK OF FOCUS

At the outset we can see that Lillo has difficulties in keeping our attention directed toward Barnwell. His problem is one of focus, which we have already considered elsewhere. In *Lady Windermere's Fan* we could see that Wilde tended, in Acts II and III, to lose sight of both his central theme and his central character, though we argued that he did eventually succeed in pulling the play back into focus; in Plautus's *Menaechmi* we saw the attention split up between two main characters and not even held upon them with consistency. With regard to his difficulty in keeping Barnwell in the spotlight, Lillo probably falls somewhere between Wilde and Plautus. Barnwell speaks, as a matter of fact, about 26% of the lines of the play. Here some comparisons will be useful: Macbeth has about 31% of the lines of Shakespeare's play; Everyman, 41% of the lines in *Everyman;* and Faustus, 42% of the lines in Marlowe's play. Though the difference between the percentage of lines spoken by Barnwell and Macbeth is not large, and though each appears in about half of the scenes of his play, Macbeth is still the center of his play in a way that Barnwell is not the center of his. Macbeth's life sets the tone for and determines, so to speak, the life of the other characters; they are so bound up with his fate that their scenes are really a dramatic amplification of his career. But Barnwell exercises no real influence on the lives of his associates; he and they, unlike Macbeth and the Scottish lords, do not share a common political and moral existence; his friends are merely *observers*. Therefore, when they have the stage, we do not feel that we are seeing Barnwell's influence on a world of which he is the center, but rather that we are watching somebody—and a not too interesting somebody—watch the main action. Note how Act III. iii and iv

give the stage over to secondary characters at a crucial time in the main character's career. Can you find other scenes of the sort?

In *Everyman* and *Dr. Faustus*, on the other hand, the hero is very much in the spotlight. In each play he has over 40% of the lines; except for two short passages, Everyman is present throughout the play; Dr. Faustus appears in ten of the fourteen scenes into which the play is often divided. Here, clearly, we find situations not unlike that in *The London Merchant:* the fate of the hero is less closely interwoven with that of the other characters than in *Macbeth*. Hence we find a number of characters—such as Friendship and Kindred in *Everyman*, and the other Scholars in *Dr. Faustus* —who are observers or outsiders, essentially uninfluenced by the hero's career. We feel, therefore, that Lillo should have organized his play like *Everyman* or *Dr. Faustus*, for Barnwell's own struggle is the central issue, and therefore his role should have received the emphasis which would be conferred by fuller development. Instead, Lillo makes Barnwell share our attention with too many other people, none of them essential to our understanding of Barnwell. That is, he uses a form more suitable to depicting the *state of a society* than the *struggles of an individual*. Why does he fall into this error? The following paragraphs will suggest some answers to this question.

2. MULTIPLICITY OF OBJECTIVES

When we examine the author's attitude to his material, which is always a matter of central importance, we find that Lillo was evidently not clear about what he was doing. In fact, it is obvious that he was *trying to do several things at once* and that the different objectives do not fit well together. The very fact that the different objectives can be identified and described separately is fairly convincing evidence that the play is not integrated. Let us notice what these objectives are.

1. There is of course the main problem of the development of Barnwell, which we shall discuss in detail later. For the time being, we may note that Lillo makes his greatest effort to center attention on Barnwell in the soliloquies, which are meant to be Shakespearian, in Act III. v and vii.

2. But Lillo is unable to let Barnwell's experience speak for itself or to see that the dramatist's job properly ends with his showing how Barnwell's moral decision has worked out. Instead, he adds, with a nagging pertinacity, direct, pointed, and wholly unnecessary moral lessons.

a. Most obvious are the moralizing couplets at the end of various scenes. Lillo actually points up his annoying shift to the undramatic by changing from prose to meter and rhyme.

b. In Act III. iv Lucy and Blunt are made, practically without motivation, to turn against Millwood. Lillo wishes, in this way, to stress her viciousness, a trait which of course might well have been left to speak for itself. He does try to account for the shift by letting Lucy describe (III. iv) a Barnwell scene which should be presented directly. Thus he scrimps on Barnwell's role and gives the other roles undue prominence; besides, too

much of the speeches of the other characters is devoted to tedious moralizing. Act V. i and xi show his wandering off the track. What by the way is wrong with Lucy's last line: "Oh, sorrow insupportable! Break, break, my heart!"?

c. To stress the moral, Thorowgood, Trueman, and Maria are used to demonstrate the threefold loss suffered by Barnwell in the realms of business, friendship, and love, respectively. Thus their whole function is didactic ("Crime doesn't pay") and external. Second, Thorowgood is the good employer, and Trueman the good apprentice, both in contrast with Barnwell, but Lillo overplays the contrast and makes them too good; Trueman, especially, becomes an annoying prig instead of an effective foil. This is what comes of making a point explicitly instead of implicitly through an exploration of character; the meaning of Barnwell's acts is pointed enough, without trite exclamations from Thorowgood and Trueman. Hence their parts are overstuffed (see Acts II. iv, IV. xvi, and most of Act V). Note, finally, that Trueman often speaks (for instance, in Act III. iii) in the style of the "sentiment" (see the analysis of *The School for Scandal*), the kind of generalized remark which suggests that the speaker has few real feelings but wants to say something "appropriate."

d. Lillo uses even Millwood to moralize: in Act IV. xviii she defends religion while attacking bad church practices and social conditions! Notice how this takes the play away from tragedy, which is concerned with the individual's relation to problems of good and evil (see *Tragedy* in the Glossary), and into the realm of the problem play, which is concerned with the issues faced by a given society at a given time. Aside from having her make such undramatic speeches, Lillo uses Millwood in a very obvious way to illustrate the influence of evil in human life. Note two technical mistakes of Lillo here: (1) In his eagerness to have a complete record of moral decline from good life to ignominious death, Lillo includes too much of the relationship between Millwood and Barnwell. He starts too early and thus does not have time enough to trace plausibly gradual development in Barnwell (I. v; I. viii; II. i). (2) To show how "one vice . . . begets another," as Lucy says, Lillo has Millwood deliberately lead Barnwell on to murder, though this involves a moral and psychological leap which is simply not motivated. Perhaps his hesitance to present this step directly (it is given by report) shows Lillo's awareness of the difficulty that he runs into here. But Lillo does know that Millwood must be presented as a human being, not as a mere personification of evil. Note what qualities he gives her to this end; note especially how her wit and cleverness suggest a hard reality that makes her in some ways a more plausible character than Trueman.

3. Besides moralizing, Lillo wants to justify his innovation of basing a tragedy on middle-class characters instead of on royalty or nobility; one of the first crusaders for this type of tragedy, he lets his arguments flow over from preface and prologue, where they may legitimately appear, into the play itself, where they do not belong. Since, for his middle-class characters, he picks a merchant and his associates, he lets himself bog down in an

irrelevant defense of merchandizing. Act I. i is an unconnected discourse which sounds like a Chamber of Commerce pamphlet; Acts I. ii and III. i dilute their propaganda with only slight suggestions of dramatic situation. A subtler damage occurs in that all the talk about commerce somehow manages to suggest that Barnwell's deeds are an offense, not so much against morality, as against good business One of the dismally anticlimactic spots in the play is Trueman's line in Act III. iii, "But few men recover reputations lost—a merchant never." The profit motive and tragedy are irreconcilable.

[illegible]

tracing the relationship of Millwood and Barnwell. Act I. iii, for instance, gives too much attention to Millwood—the *means* by which the tragic hero is to be influenced. Act IV. xvi harps on Millwood as strategist, a subject which needs no further demonstration at this late point. Worse than that, Lillo waters down his tragedy when he has Thorowgood accuse Millwood of being "sole cause" of Barnwell's trouble. To evade responsibility and look for a scapegoat constitutes a muddleheaded flight from the moral responsibility with which tragedy is concerned. Macbeth, for example, does not blame Lady Macbeth, nor Faustus, Mephistopheles, Shakespeare and Marlowe know that the problem is ultimately an inner one. Lillo, however, carries matters even a step further in Act IV. xviii when he starts absolving the "sole cause" by blaming society for Millwood's state. When he gets to the origins of prostitution, he is writing sociology, or, in literary terms, the problem play (note, in this connection, certain resemblances between Millwood and Mrs. Erlynne in *Lady Windermere's Fan*.) He is scientist rather than artist when he describes the impact of society on Millwood instead of exploring the qualitative differences which make her and other women behave differently in response to the same impact. Thus, he eliminates the element of choice which we shall see is so essential in *Faustus* and *Macbeth*. The study of Millwood as a social product and a social influence gets away from the subject and attitude proper to tragedy.

5. Lillo knows, however, that above all his play must work in emotional terms. The emotional effect should, and in some parts does, come naturally from the development of Barnwell, but Lillo consciously plays for our emotions in other ways also. His use of Trueman and Maria constantly betrays him.

Consider Maria, whom we are supposed to pity and admire. One notices that, actually, she is extraneous; her situation *does nothing* in the play. Compare Shakespeare's use of Ophelia in *Hamlet* through Hamlet's atti- [illegible] Barnwell [illegible] so that she [illegible] ompare her with Octavia in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and in Dryden's *All for Love*. In the former, Octavia has a small part, but it is effective: she is

shown in direct relationship with her husband and is thus an organic part of the play. In Dryden's play, Octavia becomes a principal force, appearing in direct conflict with Cleopatra. But Maria is not a major character nor is she even a minor character that is integrated with the rest of the play. Take Act V. ix. Since her emotions are not reciprocated, they and her appearance in jail both lack dignity; all she can do is talk about her feelings, an act which combines bad taste with irrelevance. As Barnwell is only a static listener, the play is out of focus again.

With Trueman, who, in general, is too much the mere observer and commentator (I. i; III. i), Lillo does a better job, at least in Act II. ii; there is direct interplay between him and Barnwell, and through him Barnwell's state of mind is exhibited. But note the excessive stress on their friendship, which is meant to be very touching, but which is still a side issue. The climactic embrace of Barnwell and Trueman produces a wrong effect by focusing attention on what, considering the seriousness of Barnwell's problem, is a triviality. Yet it is supposed to be very heart-warming. For reasons of this sort the play is often called a "sentimental tragedy."

Consider Act III. iii. Here the action does advance, but Lillo avoids presenting the advance directly. Instead of sharing in the emotions of Barnwell as he absconds, we are asked to be moved by the exclamations of Trueman and Maria. The effect is one of sentimentality (see Glossary) because we are removed from the source of the emotion. Their praise of Barnwell ("a soul so delicate") is too easy; we see no basis for their enthusiasm. Maria's concealment of the theft is totally unrelated to Barnwell's central problem but is presented merely in order to emphasize her benevolence—a method which is always likely to produce a sentimental effect.

3. THE TREATMENT OF BARNWELL

Lillo's main business, of course, is with Barnwell, to whom he should have given more space. Not until Act II does Lillo begin to take enough care in presenting Barnwell's inner disturbance, and he effectively restrains his tendency to sentimentalism when he introduces several good ironic scenes: Act II. iv, where, from intended kindness, Thorowgood refuses to hear a confession that might save Barnwell; and Act II. ix–xiv, where Barnwell returns to Millwood after thinking he has conquered his passion for her (II. v). Here, too, Lillo is able to keep his play on the psychological rather than the didactic level, as Barnwell's saying he has won a "painful victory" indicates.

Lillo makes his strongest effort to get inside Barnwell's mind at the time of the murder, Act III. v ff. Yet notice, first of all, the mistakes Lillo makes here. He gives too much emphasis to the uncle, whom we do not know, and whose premonitions, apostrophe to death, and prayer are simply artificial, "theatrical" means for working up an effect. Here we see the unsteadiness of focus revealing itself again. Lillo becomes preoccupied with the stock devices of melodrama, such as the disguise, pistol, poniard,

and sword, and thus allows his dramatic effect to degenerate into triviality. He falls back into sentimentality by stressing the uncle's benevolence, which is too simple to be plausible; we need to know that the author does not consider a kindly kiss the only possible or likely response to a death-blow, or we again accuse him of arrant tear-jerking. He becomes maudlin by having Barnwell swoon, pointlessly, on his uncle's body. Compare, for instance, Juliet's falling on Romeo's body as she dies—an act both symbolic and ironic.

Barnwell's Language. But aside from this bogging down in the *circumstances* surrounding the tragic action, Lillo makes a decided effort to deal with Barnwell directly, and here we must consider the kind of language Barnwell speaks. Lillo tries hard to suggest a real struggle: Barnwell's speeches are developed with some fullness.

They use specific images (darkness of day, the sound of the stream) and comparisons (Nero, Cain), though Lillo does not make much effort to unite these images in a coherent pattern of meaning. But if we go on to compare Barnwell's soliloquies with those of Macbeth (I. vii and II. i), who is also being impelled to crime by ambition, we find differences. In Shakespeare, the situation speaks for itself, in Lillo, we have the usual moralizing lines. Shakespeare uses blank verse, which he controls as a part of the total means of giving expression to the situation; Lillo appears to be using prose, but (as in many parts of the play) the actual rhythm is not that of prose but of blank verse—a fact readily revealed by printing part of the speech as verse:

[illegible]

than common speed to avoid the sight of what
I'm doomed to act Since I set forth on this
accursed design, where'er I tread, methinks,
the solid earth trembles beneath my feet

The unacknowledged meter serves as an artificial heightening device, a little like the tears to which Lillo is much addicted

Moreover, though he makes some effort at concreteness, Lillo gives Barnwell lines full of abstract and conventional expressions which suggest a sermon about somone else rather than a setting forth of his own emotions He speaks of Virtue, Conscience, nature, and reason, of "madness of desire" and "impetuous passion." Compare Shakespeare's single, original image for Macbeth's motive:

I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other—

Or take *murder*. Barnwell hears a stream "murmur 'Murder'", in Act III. vii he talks about "murdering hand," "murdered saint," "murder the

worst of crimes," as if Lillo thought that repetition of the word *murder* were enough. Compare *Macbeth* (II. i):

> . . . wither'd Murder,
> Alarum'd-by his sentinel, the wolf,
> Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
> With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
> Moves like a ghost.

And in Act II. ii:

> "Macbeth does murder sleep," the innocent sleep,
> Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care, . . .
>
> "Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
> Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more."

Again, Barnwell and Macbeth state certain arguments against the projected murder—their relationship to, and the character of, the victim. Then Barnwell says, "I stiffen with horror at my own impiety"—a conventional and generalized phrase which suggests only that he is trying to feel horrified. Compare Macbeth on Duncan:

> . . . his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against
> The deep damnation of his taking-off;
> And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> That tears shall drown the wind. . . .

By seeing the situation concretely in terms of the inevitable aftermath, Macbeth shows real, not merely verbal, horror. Shakespeare develops one figure into a full, direct, dramatic expression of his idea; Lillo describes it, talks about it, repeats it, and insists on it—and still stays unconvincingly outside it. In Act IV. x Millwood really seems more right than Lillo intends when she calls Barnwell a "whining . . . canting villain," for *whining* describes the effect produced by Lillo's vast but inept efforts to whip up horror. When Barnwell says, "Think you I added sacrilege to murder?" he actually dilutes the sense of evil by the implied praise of his own forbearance; we feel that he should have gone on and stolen the money with a kind of sardonic satisfaction in the increase of his moral debt. Or note the subtle self-exoneration in "Behold these hands all crimsoned o'er with my dear uncle's blood! Here's a sight to make a statue start with horror, or to turn a living man into a statue." The *dear* stresses his own affectionate nature, though he should hardly have the presumption to mention it here; the balanced structure of the second sentence makes it sound like a mere exercise in public speaking, especially when we realize that Barnwell has not turned into a statue. Compare Macbeth (II. iii):

> What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes.
> *Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood*
> Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red.

Here is no talk about "dear Duncan" or about what a terrible sight this is. Instead the blood comes to symbolize a crime too monstrous to be expunged.

The Problem of Acts IV and V. But these Barnwell-Millwood scenes (IV. x–xiv) are good at least to the extent that the outcome of them is ironic for Barnwell. And his disillusionment, added to his sense of iniquity, really ends the play. But Lillo's muddled sense of tragedy, which leads him to dispose of Millwood at a disproportionate length which gets the play out of focus again, also leads him into a needless Act V which is full of the didactic and the sentimental. Scenes i and xi are purely didactic, and Scene ii is largely for edification; Scene ix is devoted to the supposed pathos of Maria—all sheer loss. Two other scenes demand attention.

Scenes v–vii show how gushing emotions, which are not the right ones and which come too easily, produce a terribly maudlin effect. Barnwell's moral anguish is barely suggested; instead we have large doses of forgiveness and lovingkindness and such an ecstatic relish of friendly love that this seems to be an end in itself. The embracing on the ground is bathos: its lack of dignity and restraint is wholly incompatible with tragic effect. All the tears are too easy; we feel that the characters are actually relishing their emotions rather than that the emotions spring naturally from the situation. For a really guilty man, Barnwell is too happy in friendship. By insisting that he would have murdered Trueman, Barnwell takes easy credit for a sense of guilt; but he shows no authenticating repulsion. Trueman's insistence on an embrace shows Lillo's misguided determination to present an emotional act that is unnecessary and overdone. Barnwell's rolling on the ground is an easy, showy way of suggesting abasement, a more real and hard way would have been to refuse to see Trueman or to accept his affection. So what we have is an emotional orgy, a frantic "revival" scene, so to speak, but no real conversion.

In Scene x, Barnwell's speech has the set quality of a commencement address; he loses dramatic reality both by showing no real feelings and by joining the audience in pointing at himself (for a real sense of what goes on in the mind of a condemned man we must go to the end of *Faustus* or the banquet scene in *Macbeth*). The embraces are again irrelevant emotional acts, especially his embracing Maria, to introduce the symbol of an emotional state when the state does not exist is sentimental. Maria, of course, is in love, but under the circumstances she seems to lack both dignity and good taste.

CONCLUSION

Lillo's constant tendency to wander into the extraneous is illustrated, finally, by the way in which Barnwell's fate comes to be identified with trial and hanging: note the contents of Acts IV. xii, V. i, and V. ix, and the staging of a needless Act V in a dungeon. Greek and Shakespearian tragedy, by contrast, are not concerned with police courts and jails, which belong to problem plays or to comedy; and on the rare occasions when we do find such scenes in successful tragedy, external matters are carefully subordinated to meaning. But Lillo has *confused the legal and the moral.* He bases Act V on the following assumption: since Barnwell is legally caught up with and lessons are publicly drawn, evil is properly punished, and we are free to stress Barnwell's excellence. It may be said for Lillo that he knows that the tragic character must be complex, not a mere villain. His difficulty is that he cannot dramatize the complexity as a whole, in all its difficulty, as he must do. He breaks it down: he shows the evil and punishes it, and then goes on to admire the good. This he does by having Barnwell's acquaintances come to jail to show great friendliness and grief. The result is thoroughly sentimental:

1. To stress one side of the hero upsets the psychological effect of tragedy. If, as Aristotle says, the tragic incidents evoke pity and terror, the trouble here is that all the stress falls on pity: we do not have the balance or fusion of the two (just as we do not have the fusion of the different sides of Barnwell) that is essential (compare sentimental comedy, where the stress is rather on virtuous conduct than on the folly which is to be satirized.)

2. The hero's merits can be stressed here only by having other people insist on them. In fact, throughout the play that is the method: we never see Barnwell convincingly act the "good" man. Lillo tries to *talk* an effect rather than *dramatize* it—the essence of sentimentality. To praise Barnwell, Trueman and Maria have to ignore his most significant piece of conduct, so that, rather than serving as trustworthy witnesses, they seem bent on an emotional orgy.

3. Finally, it is difficult at best to secure a valid emotional effect in Act V because no decisive action is taking or can take place. Everything is settled, and all we have is a loquacious post-mortem. When Lillo, in the course of that post-mortem, starts using "strong" emotional words, we remain indifferent.

In sum, Lillo is unable to deal adequately with his central problem. Here, as throughout the play, he shows only a partial conception of what tragedy is. In trying to do many things he has fallen down. Lamb doubtless felt something of the sort when he called the play a "nauseous sermon" that still made "uncle-murder too trivial."

QUESTIONS

1. Some years after its original appearance *The London Merchant* was presented with an additional scene which portrayed the place of execution. A crowd is present and the gallows is visible. Lucy and Blunt talk about the terrors of death. Most of the lines are spoken by Barnwell, urging Millwood to repent, and by Millwood refusing to do so. Does it appear to you that such a scene would be a valuable dramatic addition?

2. Note that in Act V there are constant references to "Millwood's crime," as if she had especial responsibility. What is the effect of such references?

3. Would Lillo's efforts to universalize the middle class have greater likelihood of success if he did not let his play get involved in "propaganda" for the commercial classes?

4. In point of quantity, at least, Macbeth's crimes are "worse" than Barnwell's; yet there is no moralizing in *Macbeth*. Would this fact appear to make Shakespeare a less morally sensitive playwright than Lillo? Could you defend the position that Macbeth is actually made a more attractive, a more humanly understandable character than Barnwell?

5. Without pushing the matter too far, we can see that Millwood and Cleopatra (in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*) have similarities. Notice, however, that Millwood moralizes and Cleopatra does not. How does this fact influence the characterization of each?

6. Note what slight change in stress would be necessary to change the Maria-Barnwell story into the Maria-Charles story of *The School for* [illegible]

[illegible] writing [illegible] more strongly in any particular kind of passage?

8. Make a detailed list of the speeches in the play which appear to be written primarily to glorify the business man. Include not only those which directly reflect Lillo's interest in trade but also those in which there are indirect indications of that interest

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Look up Morton's *Speed the Plough* under Exercises on Additional Plays. *Speed the Plough*, like *The London Merchant*, tries to achieve tragedy but actually is melodrama. At the same time, it has farcical effects like those of Plautus's *Menaechmi*. As a hodge-podge of various dramatic motifs, it provides interesting material for study.

PART THREE



MORE MATURE TYPES

1. *Introduction*

PART three presents more mature types of the drama than those which we have studied in Part Two. Here we find, in general, that the dramatists have chosen subjects and methods more likely to lead to successful results at a mature level. This is not to say that the dramatists to be considered have been uniformly successful; the reader will doubtless discover various shortcomings in the plays to be read. But he will certainly be aware that the dramatists have [illegible] those which [illegible] fairly simple [illegible] ne; the farce with its transparent scheme of making the most of mistakes of identity, the would-be tragedy in which the author's own confusion about what he was doing could hardly obscure from the reader his fundamentally over-simple conception of the nature of tragedy. In Part Three, however, the patterns are far less simple.

Sheridan's *School for Scandal* is obviously a much more complex comedy than the *Menaechmi*; with it, we return to wit and satire of the sort found in Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. We shall find that it resembles that play further in that it seeks, beneath the surface of amusement, to make certain serious suggestions about human experience. But Sheridan's mode of treatment of these matters involves several special complications and will force us to glance, at least briefly, at that spurious type of comedy which dominated the period in which Sheridan wrote—"sentimental comedy."

Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, on the contrary, is an entirely serious play. In one respect it resembles the "problem play" aspect of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, in another aspect, it will compel us to examine again the nature of tragedy and to develop some of the considerations of this topic already raised by the study of *Everyman* and *The London Merchant*, still another aspect of the play involves dramatic techniques as such and will afford an opportunity to consider on an even higher level of refinement some of the skills we have noted already in Wilde.

Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*, combines comedy with what will be for us the new material of historic drama; hence the play brings up an entirely new kind of problem Indeed, the comedy element here will itself offer us new material, for, in contrast with the satirical intentions of Wilde and Sheridan, Shakespeare is primarily concerned with the comedy inherent in character.

Congreve's *Way of the World* provides a climax to our study of comedy since it offers the most polished example we have of the comedy of manners. Yet *The Way of the World* is much more than merely a brilliant example of a special mode. We shall find it to be one of the most complex plays which we are studying, and, as such, a "serious" play as well as an entertaining comedy.

2. Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL, 1777, ante-dates *Lady Windermere's Fan* by 115 years. Yet the plays are in some respects markedly similar—in their satire of society, their use of witty dialogue, their employment of large numbers of characters. Even here, however, the reader will discern some difference—the difference of effect that results, for instance, from the contrast between Wilde's attitudes to the two chief antagonists in his play, Lady Windermere and Mrs. Erlynne, and Sheridan's attitude toward the Surface brothers, the corresponding pair in his play. If the student will give attention to this contrast as he reads, he will find some of the main clues to what Sheridan is doing.

In pursuing the contrast between the two, the student will also come upon one of the matters which do reflect a significant difference growing out of the difference in time between the two plays. For in the latter eighteenth century, when Sheridan wrote, dramatists were less concerned with satire than with what is called "sentimental comedy," the method of which, in general, was to *praise good* rather than *ridicule folly*. So the tendency was to stress the characters that were amiable and admirable rather than those who were laughable, the plays ended frequently in scenes of reform and reward, and the tone was more likely to be edifying than amusing.

This revulsion against the traditional function of comedy did not occur unchallenged. Yet the spirit of the times was on the side of the sentimental comedy. The rise of the middle classes, the reaction against the brilliant comedy of the Restoration, the attempt to refine manners and improve morals—all tended to favor the praise of virtue and the cultivation of sentiment.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Goldsmith and Sheridan carried out a conscious attack on the sentimental comedy, though not with unqualified success. With regard to *The School for Scandal*, therefore, this question arises: has Sheridan succeeded in completely freeing himself from the limitations of sentimental comedy? More specifically, has Sheridan tended to focus our attention on the ought-to-be, on rewards, on edification rather than on the ridicule of folly?

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Sir Peter Teazle
Sir Oliver Surface
Joseph Surface
Charles Surface
Crabtree
Sir Benjamin Backbite
Rowley
Moses
Trip
Snake
Careless
Sir Toby Bumper

Lady Teazle
Maria
Lady Sneerwell
Mrs. Candour

PROLOGUE

Written by Mr. Garrick

A school for scandal! tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school this modish art to teach you?
No need of lessons now, the knowing think;
We might as well be taught to eat and drink.
Caused by a dearth of scandal, should the vapors
Distress our fair ones, let them read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit,
Crave what you will,—there's *quantum sufficit.*
"Lord!" cries my Lady Wormwood, who loves tattle
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle,
Just risen at noon, all night at cards when threshing
Strong tea and scandal,—"Bless me, how refreshing!
Give me the papers, Lisp,—how bold and free! [*Sips.*]
Last night Lord L. [*sips*] *was caught with Lady D.*
For aching head what charming sal volatile! [*Sips.*]
If Mrs. B. will still continue flirting,
We hope she'll draw, or we'll undraw the curtain.
Fine satire, poz![1] In public all abuse it,
But by ourselves [*sips*] our praise we can't refuse it.
Now, Lisp, read you,—there at that dash and star."
"Yes, ma'am. *A certain lord had best beware,*
Who lives not twenty miles from Grosvenor Square,
For, should he Lady W. find willing,
Wormwood is bitter—" "Oh! that's me! the villain!
Throw it behind the fire and never more
Let that vile paper come within my door."
Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart;
To reach our feelings, we ourselves must smart.
Is our young bard so young to think that he
Can stop the full spring-tide of calumny?
Knows he the world so little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil's sooner raised than laid.
So strong, so swift, the monster there's no gagging,
Cut Scandal's head off, still the tongue is wagging.
Proud of your smiles once lavishly bestowed,

[1] Positively

Again our young Don Quixote takes the road;
To show his gratitude he draws his pen
And seeks this hydra, Scandal, in his den.
For your applause all perils he would through,—
He'll fight (that's write) a cavalliero true,
Till every drop of blood (that's ink) is spilt for you.

ACT I

[Scene I. Lady Sneerwell's house.]

[*Discovered, Lady Sneerwell at the dressing table; Snake drinking chocolate.*]

Lady Sneerwell: The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

Snake: They were, madam; and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneerwell: Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake: That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish. In the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done.

Lady Sneerwell: Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt has a very pretty talent and a great deal of industry.

Snake: True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge, she has been the cause of six matches being broken off and three sons being disinherited; of four forced elopements and as many close confinements; nine separate maintenances and two divorces. Nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-à-tête* in the *Town and Country Magazine* [1] when the parties, perhaps, had never seen each other's face before in the course of their lives.

Lady Sneerwell: She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake: 'Tis very true. She generally designs well, has a free tongue and a bold invention; but her coloring is too dark and her outlines often extravagant. She wants that delicacy of tint and mellowness of sneer which distinguish your ladyship's scandal.

Lady Sneerwell: You are partial, Snake.

Snake: Not in the least; everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look than many can with the most labored detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneerwell: Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself in the early part of my life by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own reputation.

Snake: Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneerwell: I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

Snake: I do. Here are two young men to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death, the eldest possessing the most amiable character and universally well spoken of, the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character; the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me why you, the widow of a city knight,[2] with a good jointure, should not close with the

[1] This magazine ran "imaginary" character sketches, often scandalous in tone.

[2] A merchant, knighted because of an office which he held.

passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so, why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneerwell: Then at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake: No!

Lady Sneerwell: His real attachment is to Maria, or to her fortune; but finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions and profit by my assistance.

Snake: Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

Lady Sneerwell: Heavens! how dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles, that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation,—that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

Snake: Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent; but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

Lady Sneerwell: For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious,—in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake: Yes! Yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England; and, above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Lady Sneerwell: True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though I fear he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes. [*Enter Servant.*]

Servant: Mr. Surface.

Lady Sneerwell: Show him up. [*Exit Servant. Enter Joseph Surface.*]

Joseph Surface: My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do today? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

Lady Sneerwell: Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment; but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us, and, believe me, the confidence is not ill placed.

Joseph Surface: Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneerwell: Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria,—or what is more material to me, your brother.

Joseph Surface: I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneerwell: Ah, my dear Snake, the merit of this belongs to you. But do your brother's distresses increase?

Joseph Surface: Every hour. I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

Lady Sneerwell: Poor Charles!

Joseph Surface: True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Poor Char[illegible] I wish it were in my [illegible] essential service [illegible] does not [illegible] brother [illegible]

[illegible] going to be [illegible] and forget that you are among friends.

Joseph Surface: Egad, that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter. However, it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, w[illegible] if he is to be reclaimed, can be so [illegible] by a person of your ladyship's supe[illegible] accomplishments and understand[illegible]

Snake: I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming. I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

Joseph Surface: Sir, your very devoted.—[*Exit Snake.*] Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any farther confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneerwell: Why so?

Joseph Surface: I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneerwell: And do you think he would betray us?

Joseph Surface: Nothing more likely. Take my word for 't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy. Ah, Maria! [*Enter Maria.*]

Lady Sneerwell: Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Maria: Oh! there's that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out and ran hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneerwell: Is that all?

Joseph Surface: If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

Lady Sneerwell: Nay, now you are too severe, for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard you were here. But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done that you should avoid him so?

Maria: Oh, he has done nothing; but 'tis for what he has said. His conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Joseph Surface: Ay, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him, for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend; and his uncle's as bad.

Lady Sneerwell: Nay, but we should make allowance; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Maria: For my part, I own, madam, wit loses its respect with me when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface?

Joseph Surface: Certainly, madam. To smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

Lady Sneerwell: Psha, there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature. The malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick. What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

Joseph Surface: To be sure, madam, that conversation where the spirit of raillery is suppressed will ever appear tedious and insipid.

Maria: Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalship, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one. [*Enter Servant.*]

Servant: Madam, Mrs. Candour is below and, if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

Lady Sneerwell: Beg her to walk in. [*Exit Servant.*] Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste, for though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

Maria: Yes, with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Joseph Surface: I' faith that's true, Lady Sneerwell. Whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneerwell: Hush!—Here she is. [*Enter Mrs. Candour.*]

Mrs. Candour: My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century? Mr. Surface, what news do you hear,—though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

Joseph Surface: Just so, indeed ma'am.

Mrs. Candour: Oh, Maria, child! What, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

Maria: I am very sorry, ma'am, the town is not better employed.

Mrs. Candour: True, true, child; but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn from the same quarter that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

Maria: 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

Mrs. Candour: Very true, child, but what's to be done? People will talk; there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gad- [illegible] from very good authority

Maria: Such reports are highly scandalous.

Mrs. Candour: So they are, child,—shameful, shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill nature of people that they say her uncle stopped her last week just as she was stepping into the York diligence with her dancing master.

Maria: I'll answer for 't there are no grounds for that report.

Mrs. Candour: Ah, no foundation in the world, I dare swear; no more probably than for the story circulated last month of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino,—though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

Joseph Surface: The license of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

Maria: 'Tis so, but in my opinion those who report such things are equally culpable.

Mrs. Candour: To be sure they are; tale bearers are as bad as the tale makers. 'Tis an old observation and a very true one; but what's to be done, as I said before? How will you prevent people from talking? Today, Mrs. Clackitt assured me Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame; and that Sir H[arry] Boquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things! No, no! Tale bearers as I said before, are just as bad as the tale makers.

Joseph Surface: Ah! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good nature!

Mrs. Candour: I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best. By the by, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined.

Joseph Surface: I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

Mrs Candour Ah, I heard so; but you must tell him to keep up his spirits. Everybody almost is in the same way Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit,—all up,[2] I hear, within this week, so, if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation

Joseph Surface Doubtless, ma'am, a very great one. [*Enter Servant*]

Servant Mr Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. [*Exit*]

Lady Sneerwell So, Maria, you see

[2] Arrested for debt

your lover pursues you. Positively you shan't escape. [*Enter Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite.*]

Crabtree: Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad, ma'am, he has a pretty wit and is a pretty poet too, isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

Sir Benjamin: Oh, fie, uncle!

Crabtree: Nay, egad, it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymer in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?—Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's *conversazione*. Come, now, your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and—

Sir Benjamin: Uncle, now, prithee—

Crabtree: I' faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at all these sort of things.

Lady Sneerwell: I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

Sir Benjamin: To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and, as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies, which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public. [*Bowing to Maria.*]

Crabtree: 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalize you!—You will be handed down to posterity like Petrarch's Laura or Waller's Sacharissa.

Sir Benjamin: Yes, madam, I think you will like them when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin. 'Fore gad they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

Crabtree: But, ladies, that's true—Have you heard the news?

Mrs. Candour: What, sir, do you mean the report of—

Crabtree: No, ma'am, that's not it. Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Candour: Impossible!

Crabtree: Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Benjamin: 'Tis very true, ma'am. Everything is fixed and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crabtree: Yes; and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

Lady Sneerwell: Why, I have heard something of this before.

Mrs. Candour: It can't be—And I wonder anyone should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir Benjamin: O lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Candour: Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

Sir Benjamin: True, madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as in constitution, who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Candour: Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crabtree: That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge? Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir Benjamin: Oh, to be sure,—the most whimsical circumstance.

Lady Sneerwell: How was it, pray?

Crabtree: Why, one evening at Mrs. Ponto's assembly the conversation happened to turn on the breeding of Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a

young lady in company, "I have known instances of it, for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins." "What," cries the Lady Dowager Dundizzy, who, you know, is as deaf as a post, "has Miss Piper had twins?" This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas next morning everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl; and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father and the farmhouse where the babies were put to nurse.

Lady Sneerwell: Strange, indeed!

Crabtree: Matter of fact, I assure you. —O lud, Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

Joseph Surface: Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

Crabtree: He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe? Sad comfort, whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on.

Joseph Surface: Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

Sir Benjamin: To be sure, he may. For my part, I never believed him to be [illegible]

[illegible]

the Jews.

Crabtree: That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman. No man is more popular there, 'fore gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine[4], and that whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his [illegible]

[illegible]

he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities, have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Joseph Surface: This may be entertaining to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Maria: [*Aside.*] Their malice is intolerable!—Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning; I'm not very well. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Candour: O dear, she changes color very much!

Lady Sneerwell: Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her. She may want assistance.

Mrs. Candour: That I will, with all my soul, ma'am. Poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be! [*Exit.*]

Lady Sneerwell: 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Benjamin: The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

Crabtree: But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that. Follow her and put her into good humor. Repeat her some of your own verses Come, I'll assist you

Sir Benjamin: Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but depend on 't your brother is utterly undone.

Crabtree: O lud, ay! Undone as ever man was! Can't raise a guinea!

Sir Benjamin: And everything sold, I'm told, that was moveable.

Crabtree. I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscots.

Sir Benjamin And I'm very sorry also to hear some bad stories against him [*Going*]

Crabtree. Oh, he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Benjamin But, however, as he's your brother— [*Going*]

[4] Government loans based upon the sale of annuities, so named because invented by the Italian banker, Tonti.

Crabtree: We'll tell you all another opportunity. [*Exeunt Crabtree and Sir Benjamin.*]

Lady Sneerwell: Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Joseph Surface: And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than Maria.

Lady Sneerwell: I doubt her affections are farther engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening; so you may as well dine where you are and we shall have an opportunity of observing farther. In the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief and you shall study sentiment. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE II. Sir Peter's house.]

[*Enter Sir Peter.*]

Sir Peter: When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men,—and I have been the most miserable dog ever since! We tiffed a little going to church and fairly quarreled before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution,—a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet she now plays her part in the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town with as ready a grace as if she never had seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square. I am sneered at by all my acquaintance and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune and contradicts all my humors; yet the worst of it is, I doubt[1] I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it. [*Enter Rowley.*]

[1] Fear.

Rowley: Oh, Sir Peter, your servant! How is it with you, sir?

Sir Peter: Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Rowley: What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

Sir Peter: A good question to a married man!

Rowley: Nay, I'm sure your lady, Sir Peter, can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Peter: Why, has anybody told you she was dead?

Rowley: Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

Sir Peter: But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am myself the sweetest tempered man alive and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Rowley: Indeed!

Sir Peter: Ay; and what is very extraordinary in all our disputes she is always in the wrong. But Lady Sneerwell and the set she meets at her house encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power over, is determined to turn rebel too and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband, meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Rowley: You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on 't, he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honored master, was at his years nearly as wild a spark; yet when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir Peter: You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both till their uncle Sir Oliver's

liberality gave them an early independence. Of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment and acts up to the sentiments he professes; but for the other, take my word for 't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend Sir Oliver will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Rowley: I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

Sir Peter: What? Let me hear!

Rowley: Sir Oliver is arrived and at this moment in town.

Sir Peter: How! You astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Rowley: I did not; but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Peter: Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis fifteen years since we met. We have had many a day together. But does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

Rowley: Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

Sir Peter: Ah! There needs no art to discover their merits. He shall have his way; but, pray, does he know I am married?

Rowley: Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

Sir Peter: What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption? Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, and he has been steady to his text. Well, he must be soon at my house, though—I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Rowley: By no means.

Sir Peter: For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes, so I'll have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

Rowley: I understand you; but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

Sir Peter: Egad, and so we must,—and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—No, the crime carries its punishment along with it. [*Exeunt.*]

QUESTIONS ON ACT I

1. Reread the section entitled "Exposition" in the discussion which follows Act I of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Does Sheridan manage his exposition as successfully as Wilde? Consider especially the early part of Scene i.

2. How rapidly does characterization proceed in Scene i?

3. What is the advantage of using certain terms from art to discuss gossip in Scene i, p. 196 b, 3 ff.? Analyze the phrase "mellowness of sneer," as well as Lady Sneerwell's remark to Joseph (p. 197 b, 43) "O lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends."

4. What is the dramatic function of Joseph's remark to Lady Sneerwell about Charles and old Rowley (p. 198 a, 7 ff.)? Of the reference to Sir Oliver's return in Scene ii (p. 203 a, 21–22)?

5. What is the source of the wit in Joseph's remark that Sir Benjamin will "abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend" (p. 198 a, 45)?

6. Who is the winner in the little interchange between Lady Sneerwell and Sir Benjamin which begins "I wonder, Sir Benjamin. . . ." (p. 200 a, 27 ff.)?

7. Do you find any puns in Scene i?

8. By what means is Charles characterized in Scene i?

9. Keeping in mind the skillful way in which Wilde makes all of his first act lead up to and focus our attention on the contents of Act II, determine whether Sheridan is equally successful in initiating action and in pointing ahead.

ACT II

[SCENE I. Sir Peter's house.]

[*Enter Sir Peter and Lady Teazle.*]

Sir Peter: Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

Lady Teazle: Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and, what's more, I will, too. What though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

Sir Peter: Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

Lady Teazle: Authority! No, to be sure! If you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me and not married me. I am sure you were old enough.

Sir Peter: Old enough! Ay, there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance.

Lady Teazle: My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

Sir Peter: No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon[1] into a greenhouse and give a *fête champêtre* at Christmas.

Lady Teazle: And am I now to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round and that roses grew under our feet!

Sir Peter: Oons, madam! If you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Lady Teazle: No, no, I don't. 'Twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

Sir Peter: Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style,—the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first, sitting at your tambour[2] in a pretty figured linen gown with a bunch of keys at your side, your hair combed smooth over a roll and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted of your own working.

Lady Teazle: Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my Aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Peter: Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

Lady Teazle: And then you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Joan[3] with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to

[1] A concert hall, a favorite resort of the fashionable world at this time.

[2] Embroidery frame. [3] An old game of cards.

strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Peter: I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach,—*vis-à-vis*,[4]—and three powdered footmen before your chair, and in the summer a pair of white cats[5] to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double behind the butler on a docked coach-horse.

Lady Teazle: No—I swear I never did that. I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir Peter: This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank,—in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady Teazle: Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, that is—

Sir Peter: My widow, I suppose?

Lady Teazle. Hem! hem!

Sir Peter: I thank you, madam; but don't flatter yourself; for, though your ill conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break my heart, I promise you. However, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady Teazle: Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

Sir Peter: 'Slife, madam, I say; had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady Teazle: Lud, Sir Peter, would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Peter: The fashion, indeed! What had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady Teazle: For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Peter: Ay! There again! Taste! Zounds, madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady Teazle: That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter; and, having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, since we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Peter: Ay, there's another precious circumstance! A charming set of acquaintance you have made there!

Lady Teazle: Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Peter: Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance, for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah, many a wretch has rid on a hurdle[6] who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of [illegible] strain the freedom of speech!

Sir Peter: Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady Teazle: Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse. When I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor, and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's, too.

Sir Peter: Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

Lady Teazle: Then, indeed, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. So good by to ye! [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter. So I have gained much by my intended expostulation! Yet with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasantly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me. [*Exit.*]

[4] A coach in which the occupants sat so as to face one another. [5] Ponies.

[6] Rail.

[SCENE II. At Lady Sneerwell's.]

[*Enter Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Crabtree, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and Joseph Surface.*]

Lady Sneerwell: Nay, positively, we will hear it.

Joseph Surface: Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

Sir Benjamin: O plague on it, uncle! 'Tis mere nonsense.

Crabtree: No, no! 'Fore gad, very clever for an extempore!

Sir Benjamin: But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know that one day last week as Lady Betty Curricle was taking the dust in Hyde Park in a sort of duodecimo phaëton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies, upon which I took out my pocketbook and in one moment produced the following:—

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies.
To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim and their tails are so long.

Crabtree: There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip and on horseback too!

Joseph Surface: A very Phœbus mounted! Indeed, Sir Benjamin!

Sir Benjamin: Oh, dear sir! Trifles, trifles. [*Enter Lady Teazle and Maria.*]

Mrs. Candour: I must have a copy.

Lady Sneerwell: Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

Lady Teazle: I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

Lady Sneerwell: Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr. Surface.

Maria: I take very little pleasure in cards; however I'll do as you please.

Lady Teazle: [*Aside.*] I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came.

Mrs. Candour: Now, I'll die; but you are so scandalous I'll forswear your society.

Lady Teazle: What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

Mrs. Candour: They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermilion to be handsome.

Lady Sneerwell: Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.

Crabtree: I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

Mrs. Candour: She has a charming, fresh color.

Lady Teazle: Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs. Candour: Oh, fie! I'll swear her color is natural. I have seen it come and go.

Lady Teazle: I dare swear you have, ma'am; it goes off at night and comes again in the morning.

Sir Benjamin: True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes; but what's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it!

Mrs. Candour: Ha, ha, ha! How I hate to hear you talk so! But surely, now, her sister is, or was, very handsome.

Crabtree: Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! She's six-and-fifty if she's an hour!

Mrs. Candour: Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three in the utmost,—and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Benjamin: Ah! There's no judging by her looks unless one could see her face.

Lady Sneerwell: Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre chalks her wrinkles.

Sir Benjamin: Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill; but, when she has finished her face, she joins it so badly to her neck that she looks like a mended statue in which the connoisseur may see at once that the

hour and hear Lady Stucco talk sentiment.

Lady Teazle: Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with the dessert after dinner, for she's just like the French fruit one cracks for mottoes, made up of paint and proverb.

Mrs. Candour: Well, I never will join in ridiculing a friend; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

Crabtree: Oh, to be sure, she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

Sir Benjamin: So she has, indeed! An Irish front—

Crabtree: Caledonian locks—

Sir Benjamin: Dutch nose—

Crabtree: Austrian lips—

Sir Benjamin: Complexion of a Spaniard—

Crabtree: And teeth *à la Chinoise*—

Sir Benjamin: In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa,—where no two guests are of a nation—

Crabtree: Or a congress at the close of a general war,—wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Mrs. Candour: Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter: [*Aside.*] Mercy on my life! A person they dine with twice a week!

Lady Sneerwell: Go, go! You are a couple of provoking toads.

Mrs. Candour: Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so, for give me leave to say that Mrs. Ogle—

Sir Peter: Madam, madam, I beg your pardon. There's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

Lady Sneerwell: Ha! ha! ha! Well said, Sir Peter! But you are a cruel creature, —too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

Sir Peter: Ah, madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

Lady Teazle: True, Sir Peter. I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

Sir Benjamin: Or rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife because one seldom sees them together.

Lady Teazle: But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir Peter: 'For heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors and pass an act for the preservation of fame, I believe I would thank them for the bill.

Lady Sneerwell: O lud, Sir Peter, would you deprive us of our privileges?

Sir Peter: Ay, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

Lady Sneerwell: Go, you monster!

Mrs. Candour: But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear!

Sir Peter: Yes, madam, I would have law merchant [3] for them, too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crabtree: Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

Sir Peter: O, nine out of ten of the malicious inventions are founded on some ridiculous misrepresentation.

Lady Sneerwell: Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

[*Enter Servant, who whispers Sir Peter.*]

Sir Peter: [*To Servant.*] I'll be with them directly. [*Exit Servant. Aside.*] I'll get away unperceived.

Lady Sneerwell: Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?

[3] Commercial law.

Sir Peter: Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me. [*Exit.*]

Sir Benjamin: Well—certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being. I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.

Lady Teazle: Oh, pray don't mind that; come, do let's hear them. [*Joins the rest of the company going into the next room, who exeunt, except Joseph Surface and Maria.*]

Joseph Surface: Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

Maria: How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humor, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness!

Joseph Surface: Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

Maria: Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the intemperance of their tongues but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.

Joseph Surface: Undoubtedly, madam; and it has always been a sentiment of mine that to propagate a malicious truth wantonly is more despicable than to falsify from revenge. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Maria: Why will you distress me by [illegible] and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

Maria: Ungenerously urged! But whatever my sentiments are for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up be-

Joseph Surface: Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown. By all that's honest I swear—[*Kneels. Enter Lady Teazle, Aside.*] Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle.—You must not—no, you shall not—for though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle—

Maria: Lady Teazle!

Joseph Surface: Yet were Sir Peter to suspect—[*Lady Teazle comes forward.*]

Lady Teazle: [*Aside.*] What is this, pray? Does he take her for me?—Child, you are wanted in the next room. [*Exit Maria.*] What is all this, pray?

Joseph Surface. Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavoring to reason with her when you came in.

Lady Teazle: Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning. Do you usually argue on your knees?

Joseph Surface. Oh, she's a child and I thought a little bombast—But, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady Teazle: No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion sanctions.

Joseph Surface: True—a mere Platonic *cicisbeo*,[4]—what every wife is entitled to.

Lady Teazle: Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so many of my country prejudices left that, though Sir Peter's ill humor may vex me ever so, it shall never provoke me to—

Joseph Surface: The only revenge in your power. Well, I applaud your moderation.

Lady Teazle: Go! You are an insinuating wretch! But we shall be missed. Let us join the company.

Joseph Surface: But we had best not return together.

Lady Teazle: Well, don't stay, for Maria shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you. [*Exit.*]

Joseph Surface: A curious dilemma my politics have run me into! I wanted at first only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last. [*Exit.*]

[SCENE III. Sir Peter Teazle's house.]

[*Enter Rowley and Sir Oliver Surface.*]

Sir Oliver: Ha! ha! ha! so my old friend is married, hey? A young wife from the country! Ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff[1] to old bachelor so long and sink into a husband at last!

Rowley: But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oliver: Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance! Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, hey?

Rowley: His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

Sir Oliver: Ay, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you. No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowley: Then, my life on 't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir, it gives me new life to find that your heart is not turned against him and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

Sir Oliver: What! Shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths; and yet I believe you have not seen many better men than your old master was?

Rowley: Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver: Egad, so he does. Mercy on me, he's greatly altered and seems to have a settled, married look! One may read *husband* in his face at this distance.

[*Enter Sir Peter.*]

Sir Peter: Ha! Sir Oliver, my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

Sir Oliver: Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter! And i' faith I am glad to find you well, believe me!

Sir Peter: Oh, 'tis a long time since we met,—fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oliver: Ay, I have had my share. But, what! I find you are married, hey? Well, well, it can't be helped; and so—I wish you joy with all my heart!

Sir Peter: Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver. Yes, I have entered into—the happy state; but we'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oliver: True, true, Sir Peter. Old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting. No, no, no.

Rowley: [*Aside to Sir Oliver.*] Take care, pray, sir.

Sir Oliver: Well, so one of my nephews is a wild fellow, hey?

Sir Peter: Wild! Ah, my old friend, I

[1] Firm.

grieve for your disappointment [illegible] He's a lost young man, indeed. [illegible] his brother will make you [illegible] Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be,—everybody in the world [illegible] well of him

Sir Oliver I am sorry to hear [illegible] has too good a character to be an honest fellow. "Everybody speaks well of him!" Pshaw! then he has bowed as low [illegible] knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue

Sir Peter What, Sir Oliver! Do you blame him for not making enemies?

Sir Oliver Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them

Sir Peter. Well, well,—you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse, he professes the noblest sentiments

Sir Oliver Oh, plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick

[illegible]

QUESTIONS ON [illegible]

1. Is the disagreement between the Teazles [illegible] comic simply because a husband and wife [illegible] more in it than the mere quarrel? Does it [illegible]

2. Analyze the influence of the wit upon the [illegible] have of the gossips. If we consider them the [illegible] their wit tend to make them more simple or [illegible]

3. Do the exit and re-entry of Lady Teazle [illegible] seem adequately motivated? Why does Sheridan [illegible] the stage at this particular point?

4. How much sense of progression does Act [illegible] Scene iii points ahead to a future action. Does this [illegible] ness as the way in which Wilde's Act I leads up [illegible]

5. See the analysis of Act II of Wilde's play and [illegible] Sheridan's Act II has a comparable rhythm and [illegible]

ACT III

[SCENE I. Sir Peter Teazle's house.]

[*Enter Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Oliver Surface, and Rowley.*]

Sir Peter: Well, then, we will see this fellow first and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jet[1] of your scheme.

Rowley: Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, whom I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was once a merchant in Dublin but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied by letter to both Mr. Surface and Charles. From the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do; and he is at this time endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

Sir Oliver: Ah! he is my brother's son.

Sir Peter: Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to—

Rowley: Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends; and, as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character and he will have a fair opportunity of judging at least of the benevolence of their dispositions. And, believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it,—

a heart to pity and a hand,
Open as day for melting charity.[2]

Sir Peter: Psha! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either when he has nothing left to give? Well, well, make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine relative to Charles's affairs?

Rowley: Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence. This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Peter: Pray, let us have him in.

Rowley: [*Apart to Servant.*] Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

Sir Peter: But, pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Rowley: Oh, I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who, he knows, has arrived, so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests. I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery and shall speedily produce him to remove some of your prejudices.

Sir Peter: I have heard too much on that subject.

Rowley: Here comes the honest Israelite. [*Enter Moses.*] This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver: Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

Moses: Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliver: That was unlucky, truly, for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

Moses: None at all. I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliver: Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

Moses: Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city who does not know him and will, I believe, advance him some money.

[1] Point. [2] Slightly misquoted from *Henry IV, Part 2*, IV, iv, 31–32.

Sir Peter: What, one Charles has never had money from before!

Moses: Yes. Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Peter: Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me! Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?

Moses: Not at all.

Sir Peter: Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old, romancing tale of a poor relation. Go with my friend Moses and represent Premium, and then, I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oliver: Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Sir Peter: True,—so you may.

Rowley: Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure. However, Moses, you understand Sir Peter and will be faithful?

Moses: You may depend upon me. [illegible] the time I was to have gone.

[illegible]

I be able to pass for a je[illegible]

Moses: There's no need. The principal is Christian.

Sir Oliver: Is he? I'm very sorry to hear it; but then, again, an't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money-lender?

Sir Peter: Not at all, 'twould not be out of character, if you went in your own carriage, would it, Moses?

Moses: Not in the least.

Sir Oliver: Well, but how must I talk? There's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

Sir Peter: Oh, there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands. Hey, Moses?

Moses: Yes, that's a very great point.

Sir Oliver: I'll answer for 't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan at least.

Moses: [illegible] you'll be [illegible]

Sir Oliver: [illegible] much then?

Moses: [illegible] double.

Sir Peter: [illegible] learning, Sir [illegible]

Sir Oliver: [illegible]

Moses: [illegible]

Sir Oliver: [illegible] do I?

Moses: [illegible]

Sir Oliver: [illegible]

Moses: [illegible]

Sir Oliver: [illegible] Well, that's very kind of him.

Sir Peter: I' [illegible] Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I [illegible]—you'll [illegible] of the trade. But, Moses, would not you have him run out a little against the annuity bill?* That would be in character, I should think.

Moses: Very much.

Rowley: And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

Moses: Ay, great pity!

Sir Peter: And abuse the public for allowing merit to an act whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious gripe of usury and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

* Designed to protect minors against the sellers of annuities. It was passed in 1777.

Sir Oliver: So, so—Moses shall give me farther particulars as we go together.

Sir Peter: You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

Sir Oliver: Oh, never fear! My tutor appears so able that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner. [*Exit with Moses.*]

Sir Peter: So, now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced. You are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Rowley: No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

Sir Peter: Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. I see Maria and want to speak with her. [*Exit Rowley.*] I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph. I am determined I will do it; he will give me his opinion sincerely. [*Enter Maria.*] So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Maria: No, sir. He was engaged.

Sir Peter: Well, Maria, do you not reflect the more you converse with that amiable young man what return his partiality for you deserves?

Maria: Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely. You compel me to declare that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Sir Peter: So—here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

Maria: This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing or corresponding with him. I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

Sir Peter: Well, well, pity him as much as you please, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Maria: Never to his brother.

Sir Peter: Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is. Don't compel me to inform you of it.

Maria: I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute, but must cease to think you so when you would compel me to be miserable. [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter: Was ever man so crossed as I am, everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter.—But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little! [*Enter Lady Teazle.*]

Lady Teazle: Lud, Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarreling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill-humored when I am not by.

Sir Peter: Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good humored at all times.

Lady Teazle: I am sure I wish I had, for I want you to be in a charming, sweet temper at this moment. Do be good humored now and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Peter: Two hundred pounds! What, ain't I to be in a good humor without paying for it? But speak to me thus and, i' faith, there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it, but seal me a bond for the repayment.

Lady Teazle: Oh, no! There,—my note of hand will do as well. [*Offering her hand.*]

Sir Peter: And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly

to surprise you. But shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady Teazle: If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarreling provided you'll own you were tired first.

Sir Peter: Well, then let our future contest be who shall be most obliging.

Lady Teazle: I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth and chuck me under the chin and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow who would deny me nothing—didn't you?

Sir Peter: Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive—

Lady Teazle: Ay, so I was, and would always take your part when my acquaintance used to abuse you and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Peter: Indeed!

Lady Teazle: Ay, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you and said I didn't think you so ugly by any means; and I dared say you'd make a very good sort of husband.

Sir Peter: And you prophesied right, and we shall now be the happiest couple—

Lady Teazle: And never differ again?

Sir Peter No, never Though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously, for in all our quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady Teazle: I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter. Indeed you always gave the provocation.

Sir Peter: Now see, my angel! Take care! Contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady Teazle. Then don't you begin it, my love.

Sir Peter: There, now, you—you—are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady Teazle: Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear—

Sir Peter: There, now you want to quarrel again

Lady Teazle: No, I'm sure I don't; but if you will be so peevish—

Sir Peter There now! Who begins first?

Lady Teazle: Why, you to be sure. I said nothing; but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Peter: No, no, madam! The fault's in your own temper.

Lady Teazle: Ay, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Peter: Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

Lady Teazle. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Peter Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

Lady Teazle So much the better

Sir Peter No, no, madam 'Tis evident you never cared a pin for me and I was a madman to marry you,—a pert, rural coquette that had refused half the honest squires in the neighborhood.

Lady Teazle. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you,—an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty only because he never could meet with anyone who would have him

Sir Peter Ay, ay, madam, but you were pleased enough to listen to me. You never had such an offer before.

Lady Teazle No? Didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match, for his estate is just as good as yours and he has broke his neck since we have been married?

Sir Peter I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—But there's an end of everything I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and . . .

madam. Yes, madam, you and Charles are, not without grounds—

Lady Teazle: Take care, Sir Peter! You had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Sir Peter: Very well, madam, very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

Lady Teazle: Agreed, agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple and never differ again, you know. Ha, ha, ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you; so bye, bye! [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter: Plagues and tortures! Can't I make her angry either? Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper. No! She may break my heart, but she shan't keep her temper. [*Exit.*]

[Scene II. Charles Surface's house.]

[*Enter Trip, Moses, and Sir Oliver Surface.*]

Trip: Here, Master Moses! If you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether— What's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliver: [*Aside to Moses.*] Mr. Moses, what is my name?

Moses: Mr. Premium.

Trip: Premium. Very well. [*Exit, taking snuff.*]

Sir Oliver: To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what! Sure, this was my brother's house?

Moses: Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, &c., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliver: In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half. [*Enter Trip.*]

Trip: My master says you must wait, gentlemen. He has company and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliver: If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message?

Trip: Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here. I did not forget little Premium. No, no, no.

Sir Oliver: Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

Trip: Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliver: Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess.

Trip: Why, yes. Here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear, and not very great either, but fifty pounds a year and find our own bags and bouquets.[1]

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Bags and bouquets! Halters and bastinadoes!

Trip: And *à propos*, Moses, have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Wants to raise money too! Mercy on me! has his distresses too, I warrant, like a lord and affects creditors and duns.

Moses: 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

Trip: Good lack, you surprise me! My friend Brush has indorsed it, and I thought when he put his name at the back of a bill 'twas the same as cash.

Moses: No, 'twouldn't do.

Trip: A small sum,—but twenty pounds. Harkee, Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] An annuity! Ha, ha! A footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done, luxury, egad!

Moses: Well, but you must insure your place.

Trip: Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place and my life too, if you please.

[1] Provide their own bag wigs and shoulder bouquets, worn by footmen.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] It's more than I would your neck.

Moses: But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip: Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes with equity of redemption before November; or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet or a post-obit on the blue and silver. These I should think, Moses, with a few pairs of point ruffles as collateral security—Hey, my little fellow?

Moses: Well, well [*Bell rings.*]

Trip: Egad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little Moses. This way, gentlemen; I'll insure my place, you know.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] If the man be a shadow of the master, this is a temple of dissipation indeed. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE III. Another room.]

[*Charles Surface, Careless, &c., &c., at a table with wine, &c.*]

Charles: 'Fore heaven, 'tis true! There's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink.

Careless: It is so, indeed, Charles They go into all the substantial luxuries of the table and abstain from nothing but wine and wit. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably, for now instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa-water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulency of champagne without the spirit or flavor.

1st Gentleman: But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

Careless: True! There's Sir Harry diets himself for gaming and is now under a hazard regimen.

Charles. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad, I am never so successful as when I am a little merry. Let me throw on a bottle of champagne and I never lose.

Careless: At least I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

2d Gentleman: Ay, that I believe.

Charles: And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties and she that floats atop is the maid that has bewitched you.

Careless: Now then, Charles, be hon- [illegible]

Careless Oh, then, we'll find some canonized vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

Charles: Here, then, bumpers, you rogues! Bumpers! Maria! Maria!

Sir [*Toby*] *Bumper.* Maria who?

Charles Oh, damn the surname! 'Tis too formal to be registered in love's calendar. But now, Sir [Toby], beware! We must have beauty superlative.

Careless. Nay, never study, Sir [Toby]. We'll stand to the toast though your mistress should want an eye and you know you have a song will excuse you

Sir [*Toby*]. Egad, so I have, and I'll give him the song instead of the lady. [*Sings.*]

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  Here's to the widow of fifty,
Here's to the flaunting, extravagant quean,
  And here's to the housewife that's thrifty
CHORUS Let the toast pass,
  Drink to the lass,—
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the
  glass!

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  prize,
Now to the maid who has none, sir!

madam. Yes, madam, you and Charles are, not without grounds—

Lady Teazle: Take care, Sir Peter! You had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Sir Peter: Very well, madam, very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

Lady Teazle: Agreed, agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple and never differ again, you know. Ha, ha, ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you; so bye, bye! [*Exit.*]

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Sir Oliver: [*Aside to Moses.*] Mr. Moses, what is my name?

Moses: Mr. Premium.

Trip: Premium. Very well. [*Exit, taking snuff.*]

Sir Oliver: To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what! Sure, this was my brother's house?

Moses: Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, &c., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliver: In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half. [*Enter Trip.*]

Trip: My master says you must wait, gentlemen. He has company and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliver: If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message?

Trip: Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here. I did not forget little Premium. No, no, no.

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Trip: Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliver: Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess.

Trip: Why, yes. Here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear, and not very great either, but fifty pounds a year and find our own bags and bouquets.[1]

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Bags and bouquets! Halters and bastinadoes!

Trip: And *à propos*, Moses, have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

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CHORUS   Let the toast pass,—
    Drink to the lass,—
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass!

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize,
  Now to the maid who has none, sir!

Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
And here's to the nymph with but one, sir!
CHORUS. Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow!
Now to her that's as brown as a berry!
Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,
And now to the girl that is merry!
CHORUS. Let the toast pass, &c.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
Young or ancient, I care not a feather;
So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,
And let us e'en toast them together!
CHORUS. Let the toast pass, &c.

All: Bravo! Bravo! [*Enter Trip and whispers Charles Surface.*]

Charles: Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little. Careless, take the chair, will you?

Careless: Nay, pr'ythee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropped in by chance?

Charles: No, faith! To tell you the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

Careless: Oh, damn it, let's have the Jew in.

1st Gentleman: Ay, and the broker too, by all means.

2d Gentleman: Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker!

Charles: Egad, with all my heart! Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in. [*Exit Trip.*] Though there's one of them a stranger, I can tell you.

Careless: Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

Charles: Oh, hang 'em, no! Wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities; and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery. [*Enter Trip, Sir Oliver, and Moses.*]

Charles: So, honest Moses! Walk in, pray, Mr. Premium. That's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

Moses: Yes, sir.

Charles: Set chairs, Trip.—Sit down, Mr. Premium.—Glasses, Trip.—Sit down, Moses.—Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment: here's *Success to usury!* Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Moses: Success to usury! [*Drinks.*]

Careless: Right, Moses! Usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliver: Then—here's—all the success it deserves! [*Drinks.*]

Careless: No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred at the toast and must drink it in a pint bumper.

1st Gentleman: A pint bumper at least!

Moses: Oh, pray, sir, consider! Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

Careless: And therefore loves good wine.

2d Gentleman: Give Moses a quart glass. This is mutiny and a high contempt for the chair.

Careless: Here, now for 't! I'll see justice done, to the last drop of my bottle.

Sir Oliver: Nay, pray, gentlemen! I did not expect this usage.

Charles: No, hang it, you shan't. Mr. Premium's a stranger.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Odd! I wish I was well out of their company.

Careless: Plague on 'em then! If they won't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come, Toby, the dice are in the next room. Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen?

Charles: I will! I will! [*Exeunt Gentlemen.*] Careless!

Careless: [*Returning.*] Well?

Charles: Perhaps I may want you.

Careless: Oh, you know I am always ready. Word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me! [*Exit.*]

Moses: Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secrecy, and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is—

Charles: Psha! Have done! Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow but a little slow at expression. He'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this: I am

an extravagant young fellow who wants to borrow money; you I take to be a prudent old fellow who have got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent. sooner than not have it; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once and may proceed to business without farther ceremony.

Sir Oliver: Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

Charles: Oh, no, sir! Plain dealing in business I always think best.

Sir Oliver: Sir, I like you the better for it. However, you are mistaken in one thing. I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend; but then he's an unconscionable dog, isn't he, Moses?

Moses: But you can't help that.

Sir Oliver: And must sell stock to accommodate you, mustn't he, Moses?

Moses: Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth and scorn to tell a lie.

Charles: Right! People that speak truth generally do. But these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What, I know money isn't to be bought without paying for 't!

Sir Oliver: Well, but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

Charles: Not a mole-hill, nor a twig, but what's in the bough-pots [1] out of the window!

Sir Oliver: Nor any stock, I presume?

Charles: Nothing but live stock,—and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But, pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections?

Sir Oliver: Why, to say truth, I am.

Charles: Then you must know that I have a devilish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

Sir Oliver: That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard, but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Charles: Oh, no! There can be no doubt! They tell me I'm a prodigious favorite and that he talks of leaving me everything.

Sir Oliver: Indeed! This is the first I've heard of it.

Charles: Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true, don't you, Moses?

Moses: Oh, yes! I'll swear to't.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal.

Charles: Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life, though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me that I give you my word I should be very sorry to hear that anything had happened to him.

Sir Oliver: Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me,—for I might live to a hundred and never see the principal.

Charles: Oh, yes, you would! The moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

Sir Oliver: Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Charles: What! I suppose you're afraid that Sir Oliver is too good a life?

Sir Oliver: No, indeed I am not, though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

Charles: There, again, now you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver. Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm *told*, and is so much altered lately that his nearest relations don't know *him*.

Sir Oliver: No! Ha, ha, ha! So much *altered* lately that his nearest relations don't know him! Ha, ha, ha! Egad! Ha, ha, ha!

Charles: Ha, ha! You're glad to hear that, little Premium?

Sir Oliver: No, no, I'm not.

[1] Window-boxes.

Charles: Yes, yes, you are! Ha, ha, ha! You know that mends your chance.

Sir Oliver: But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over. Nay, some say he is actually arrived.

Charles: Psha! sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no, rely on't, he's at this moment at Calcutta, isn't he, Moses?

Moses: Oh, yes, certainly.

Sir Oliver: Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority, haven't I, Moses?

Moses: Yes, most undoubted!

Sir Oliver: But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you could dispose of?

Charles: How do you mean?

Sir Oliver: For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

Charles: O lud! that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you how better than I can.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Good lack, all the family race-cups and corporation bowls![2] —Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compact.

Charles: Yes, yes, so it was,—vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition; so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Mercy upon me! Learning that had run in the family like an heirloom!—Pray what are become of the books?

Charles: You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

Moses: I know nothing of books.

Sir Oliver: So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

Charles: Not much, indeed, unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above; and if you have a taste for paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain.

Sir Oliver: Hey! What the devil? Sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

Charles: Every man of them to the best bidder.

Sir Oliver: What! Your great-uncles and aunts?

Charles: Ay, and my great-grandfathers and grandmothers too.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Now I give him up!—What the plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odd's life, do you take me for Shylock in the play that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

Charles: Nay, my little broker, don't be angry. What need you care if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliver: Well, I'll be the purchaser. I think I can dispose of the family canvas. [*Aside.*] Oh, I'll never forgive him for this, never! [*Enter Careless.*]

Careless: Come, Charles; what keeps you?

Charles: I can't come yet. I' faith, we are going to have a sale above stairs. Here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors.

Careless: Oh, burn your ancestors!

Charles: No, he may do that afterwards if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you. Egad, you shall be auctioneer; so come along with us.

Careless: Oh, have with you, if that's the case. Handle a hammer as well as a dice-box!

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Oh, the profligates!

Charles: Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business.

Sir Oliver: Oh, yes, I do, vastly! Ha, ha, ha! Yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction. Ha, ha! [*Aside.*] Oh, the prodigal!

Charles: To be sure! When a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance if he can't make free with his own relations? [*Exeunt.*]

[2] Testimonial bowls presented by the city for distinguished services.

QUESTIONS ON ACT III

1. In what way does the use of a character like Rowley, in Scene i, considerably ease the problems of the author of the play? Does the use of Rowley provide too easy solutions?
2. What is the technique by which Sheridan manages to introduce some satire of money-lending in Scene i without our feeling that it is irrelevant?
3. How does the wit of Moses influence the impression which he makes upon us? How does it influence the tone of the actual money-lending scene?
4. Does the Teazle argument advance the action in any way? Analyze the effectiveness of Sir Peter's final remark in Scene i, "I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper."
5. In the narrow technical sense the scene of Trip's borrowing money (Scene ii) is irrelevant. Is there another sense, however, in which the scene might be justified? What do we learn through it?
6. Why do Charles's friends in Scene iii insist on having the money-lenders in? Note the use of irony in the rest of this scene.
7. How does Sheridan endeavor to create a sense of movement forward at the end of Act III?

ACT IV

[SCENE I. Picture room at Charles's.]

[*Enter Charles Surface, Sir Oliver Surface, Moses, and Careless.*]

Charles: Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in. Here they are, the family of the Surfaces up to the Conquest.

Sir Oliver: And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Charles: Ay, ay, these are done in the true spirit of portrait-painting; no *volontière grâce* or expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance, yet contrive to make your portrait independent of you, so that you m[illegible] the original and not hurt the [illegible] No, no; the merit of these is [illegible] veterate likeness,—all stiff and awkward as the originals and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir Oliver: Ah! We shall never see such figures of men again.

Charles: I hope not! Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family But come, get [illegible] Mr. Auctioneer here's [illegible] [illegible] hammer; and [illegible] [illegible] alogy in full Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany; here's the family tree for you, you rogue! This shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree

Sir Oliver [*Aside.*] What an unnatural rogue! An *ex post facto* parricide!

Careless Yes, yes, here's a list of [illegible] 'twill serve not only as a hammer but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin! A-going, a-going, a-going!

Charles Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great-uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars and got that cut

over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet.[1] What say you, Mr. Premium? Look at him. There's a hero! Not cut out of his feathers as your modern clipped captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals as a general should be. What do you bid?

Moses: Mr. Premium would have you speak.

Charles: Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff officer.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Heaven deliver me! His famous uncle Richard for ten pounds!—Very well, sir, I take him at that.

Charles: Careless, knock down my uncle Richard.—Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done by Kneller,[2] thought to be in his best manner, and a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten,—the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Ah, poor Deborah, a woman who set such a value on herself!—Five pounds ten—She's mine.

Charles: Knock down my aunt Deborah! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs. You see, Moses, these pictures were done some time ago when beaux wore wigs and the ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliver: Yes, truly, head-dresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

Charles: Well, take that couple for the same.

Moses: 'Tis a good bargain.

Charles: Careless!—This now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit. What do you rate him at, Moses?

Moses: Four guineas.

Charles: Four guineas! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig. Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack.[3] Do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliver: By all means.

Careless: Gone!

Charles: And these are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of parliament and noted speakers; and what's very extraordinary, I believe this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliver: That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price for the honor of parliament.

Careless: Well said, little Premium! I'll knock them down at forty.

Charles: Here's a jolly fellow! I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Manchester; take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliver: No, no; six will do for the mayor.

Charles: Come, make it guineas,[4] and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliver: They're mine.

Charles: Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on 't, we shall be all day retailing in this manner. Do let us deal wholesale, what say you, little Premium? Give me three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

Careless: Ay, ay, that will be the best way.

Sir Oliver: Well, well, anything to accommodate you. They are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Careless: What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

Sir Oliver: Yes, sir, I mean that, though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow by any means.

Charles: What, that? Oh, that's my uncle Oliver. 'Twas done before he went to India.

Careless: Your uncle Oliver! Gad,

[1] Victory won over the French in 1709. [2] Sir Godfrey Kneller (1648–1723).

[3] On which the Lord Chancellor sits in the House of Lords; hence a symbol here of the legal profession. [4] The pound is twenty shillings; the guinea, twenty-one.

then you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw, an unforgiving eye and a damned disinheriting countenance! An inveterate knave, depend on't, don't you think so, little Premium?

Sir Oliver: Upon my soul, sir, I do not. I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

Charles: No, hang it! I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] The rogue's my nephew after all!—But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Charles: I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of them?

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] I forgive him for everything!—But, sir, when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Charles: Don't tease me, master broker. I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] How like his father the dog is!—Well, well, I have done. [*Aside.*] I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a striking resemblance—Here's a draft for your sum.

Charles: Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds!

Sir Oliver: You will not let Sir Oliver go?

Charles: Zounds, no! I tell you once more.

Sir Oliver: Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that another time But give me your hand on the bargain. You are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.—Come, Moses.

[illegible]

Sir Oliver: Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

Charles: But hold! Do, now, send a genteel conveyance for them, for, I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliver: I will, I will,—for all but little Oliver.

Charles: Ay, all but the little nabob.

Sir Oliver: You're fixed on that?

Charles: Peremptorily.

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] A dear extravagant rogue!—Good day! Come, Moses. [*Aside.*] Let me hear now who dares call him profligate! [*Exeunt Sir Oliver and Moses.*]

Careless. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever met with.

Charles: Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think I wonder how Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow. Ha! here's Rowley.—Do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a few moments.

Careless. I will, but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old, musty debts or any such nonsense, for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

Charles Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

Careless: Nothing else.

Charles. Ay, ay, never fear [*Exit Careless.*] So, this was an odd old fellow, indeed Let me see, two-thirds of this is mine by right, five hundred and thirty odd pounds 'Fore heaven, I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for! [*Bowing to the pictures*] Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant. [*Enter Rowley*] Ha, old Rowley! Egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance

Rowley Yes, I heard they were a-going But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses

Charles. Why, there's the point, my distresses are so many that I can't afford [illegible] with my spirits, but I shall be splenetic, all in good time [illegible] I suppose you are surprised

that I am not more sorrowful at parting with so many near relations. To be sure, 'tis very affecting; but you see they never move a muscle; so why should I?

Rowley: There's no making you serious a moment.

Charles: Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here get me this changed directly and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

Rowley: A hundred pounds! Consider only—

Charles: Gad's life, don't talk about it! Poor Stanley's wants are pressing and, if you don't make haste, we shall have someone call that has a better right to the money.

Rowley: Ah, there's the point! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb—

Charles: "Be just before you're generous."—Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an old, lame, hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity for the soul of me.

Rowley: Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection—

Charles: Ay, ay, that's very true; but hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by heaven I'll give; so damn your economy. And now for hazard! [*Exeunt.*]

[Scene II. The parlor.]

[*Enter Sir Oliver Surface and Moses.*]

Moses: Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oliver: True, but he would not sell my picture.

Moses: And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliver: But he would not sell my picture.

Moses: And games so deep.

Sir Oliver: But he would not sell my picture. Oh, here's Rowley! [*Enter Rowley.*]

Rowley: So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase—

Sir Oliver: Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Rowley: And here he has commissioned me to re-deliver you part of the purchase money. I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

Moses: Ah, there's the pity of all; he is so damned charitable.

Rowley: And left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid; and this hundred would satisfy them.

Sir Oliver: Well, well, I'll pay his debts and his benevolence, too. But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Rowley: Not yet awhile. Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time. [*Enter Trip.*]

Trip: Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out. This way.—Moses, a word. [*Exit with Moses.*]

Sir Oliver: There's a fellow for you! Would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming and wanted to raise money before he got to his master!

Rowley: Indeed!

Sir Oliver: Yes, they are now planning an annuity business. Ah, Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters when they were worn a little threadbare, but now they have their vices like their birthday clothes,[1] with the gloss on. [*Exeunt.*]

[Scene III. A library in Joseph Surface's house.]

[*Enter Joseph Surface and Servant.*]

Joseph Surface: No letter from Lady Teazle?

Servant: No, sir.

Joseph Surface: I am surprised she has not sent if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not

[1] Costumes worn for the celebration of the birthday.

suspect me. Yet I wish I may not lose the heiress through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife. However, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor. [*Knocking heard without*]

Servant: Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

Joseph Surface: Hold! See whether it is or not before you go to the door. I have a particular message for you if it should be my brother.

Servant: 'Tis her ladyship, sir. She always leaves her chair at a milliner's in the next street

Joseph Surface: Stay, stay! Draw that screen before the window. That will do My opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so curious a temper. [*Servant draws the screen and exit*] I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria, but she must by no means be let into that secret,—at least, till I have her more in my power. [*Enter Lady Teazle*]

Lady Teazle. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before

Joseph Surface: O madam, punctuality is a species of constancy very unfashionable in a lady of quality.

Lady Teazle. Upon my word, you [illegible]

[illegible] of the story, isn't it?

Joseph Surface: [*Aside.*] I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up

Lady Teazle: I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him and then, perhaps, he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

Joseph Surface: [*Aside*] Indeed I [illegible] not.—Oh, certainly I do! for then [illegible] dear Lady Teazle would also be c[illegible]vinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady Teazle: Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking to have the most ill-natured things said of one? And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too. That's what vexes me.

Joseph Surface: Ay, madam, to be sure, that's the provoking circumstance,—without foundation. Yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed; for, when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it

Lady Teazle: No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice. But to attack me, who am really so innocent and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody,—that is, of any friend; and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart,—indeed, 'tis monstrous!

Joseph Surface. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken; and she owes it to the honor of her sex to endeavor to outwit him

Lady Teazle Indeed! So that, if he suspects me without cause, it follows that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for it?

Joseph Surface: Undoubtedly,—for your husband should never be deceived in you, and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady Teazle. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence—

Joseph Surface: Ah, my dear madam, there is the great mistake! 'Tis this very [illegible] the world's opinion? Why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? Why, the consciousness of your

own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper and outrageous at his suspicions? Why, the consciousness of your own innocence.

Lady Teazle: 'Tis very true.

Joseph Surface: Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but make a trifling *faux pas,* you can't conceive how cautious you would grow and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

Lady Teazle: Do you think so?

Joseph Surface: Oh, I am sure on't! And then you would find all scandal cease at once, for, in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

Lady Teazle: So, so; then I perceive your prescription is that I must sin in my own defense and part with my virtue to preserve my reputation?

Joseph Surface: Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

Lady Teazle: Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

Joseph Surface: An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

Lady Teazle: Why, if my understanding were once convinced—

Joseph Surface: Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes,—heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

Lady Teazle: Don't you think we may as well leave honor out of the question?

Joseph Surface: Ah, the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

Lady Teazle: I doubt they do, indeed; and I will fairly own to you that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your honorable logic after all.

Joseph Surface: Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of—[*Taking her hand. Enter Servant.*] 'Sdeath, you blockhead, what do you want?

Servant: I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

Joseph Surface: Sir Peter! Oons,—the devil!

Lady Teazle: Sir Peter! O lud! I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

Servant: Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

Lady Teazle: Oh, I'm quite undone! What will become of me now, Mr. Logic? Oh, he's on the stairs—I'll get behind here, and if ever I'm so imprudent again—[*Goes behind the screen.*]

Joseph Surface: Give me that book. [*Sits down. Servant pretends to adjust his chair.*] [*Enter Sir Peter Teazle.*]

Sir Peter: Ay, ever improving himself! Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface—

Joseph Surface: Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon. [*Gaping, throws away the book.*] I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Peter: 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge,—hung, I perceive, with maps.

Joseph Surface: Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Peter: I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

Joseph Surface: [*Aside.*] Ay, or to hide anything in a hurry either.

Sir Peter: Well, I have a little private business—

Joseph: [*To Servant.*] You need not stay.

Servant: No, sir. [*Exit.*]

Joseph Surface: Here's a chair, Sir Peter. I beg—

Sir Peter: Well, now we are alone, there's a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you, a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me very unhappy.

Joseph Surface: Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

Sir Peter: Ay, 'tis but too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

Joseph Surface: Indeed! You astonish me!

Sir Peter: Yes, and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

Joseph Surface: How! You alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Peter: Ay, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

Joseph Surface: Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

Sir Peter: I am convinced of it. Ah, it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

Joseph Surface: I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

Sir Peter: Oh, no! What say you to Charles?

Joseph Surface. My brother? Impossible!

Sir Peter: Oh, my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

Joseph Surface. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

Sir Peter. True, but your brother has no sentiment. You never hear him talk so

Joseph Surface: Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle

Sir Peter: Ay, but what is principle

[illegible]

Sir Peter: And then, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any great affection for me; and, if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why, the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor who had married a girl.

Joseph Surface: That's true, to be sure. They would laugh.

Sir Peter: Laugh, ay! And make ballads and paragraphs and the devil knows what of me.

Joseph Surface: No, you must never make it public.

Sir Peter. But then, again, that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a

[illegible]

jury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Peter: Ay! I that was, in a manner, left his guardian, in whose house he had been so often entertained, who never in my life denied him—my advice!

Joseph Surface: Oh, 'tis not to be credited! There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine, I disclaim kindred with him; for the man who can break the laws of hospitality and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Peter: What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

Joseph Surface Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

Sir Peter: I am sure I wish to think well of her and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her, and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was

[illegible]

mistress in that respect for the future, and, if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the

drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death.

Joseph Surface: This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous. [*Aside.*] I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

Sir Peter: Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

Joseph Surface: [*Aside.*] Nor I, if I could help it.

Sir Peter: And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

Joseph Surface: [*Softly.*] Oh, no, Sir Peter! Another time, if you please.

Sir Peter: I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

Joseph Surface: [*Softly.*] I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate! [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way!

Sir Peter: And though you are averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion for Maria, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

Joseph Surface: Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses can never—[*Enter Servant.*] Well, sir?

Servant: Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street and says he knows you are within.

Joseph Surface: 'Sdeath, you blockhead! I'm not within. I'm out for the day.

Sir Peter: Stay—Hold! A thought has struck me. You shall be at home.

Joseph Surface: Well, well, let him up. [*Exit Servant. Aside.*] He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however.

Sir Peter: Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere; then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

Joseph Surface: Oh, fie, Sir Peter! Would you have me join in so mean a trick? To trepan my brother too!

Sir Peter: Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent. If so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me. Here, behind the screen will be —Hey! What the devil! There seems to be one listener here already! I'll swear I saw a petticoat!

Joseph Surface: Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either.[2] Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me; and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

Sir Peter: Ah, you rogue,—But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Joseph Surface: Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it!

Sir Peter: No? Then, faith, let her hear it out.—Here's a closet will do as well.

Joseph Surface: Well, go in there.

Sir Peter: Sly rogue! Sly rogue! [*Going into the closet.*]

Joseph Surface: A narrow escape, indeed! And a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady Teazle: [*Peeping.*] Couldn't I steal off?

Joseph Surface: Keep close, my angel!

Sir Peter: [*Peeping.*] Joseph, tax him home!

Joseph Surface: Back, my dear friend!

Lady Teazle: [*Peeping.*] Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

[2] See the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in *Genesis*, 39.

Joseph Surface: Be still, my life!

Sir Peter: [*Peeping.*] You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Joseph Surface: In, in, my good Sir Peter!—'Fore gad, I wish I had a key to the door! [*Enter Charles Surface.*]

Charles: Holla, brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What, have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Joseph Surface: Neither, brother, I assure you.

Charles: But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Joseph Surface: He was, brother; but, hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

Charles: What, was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Joseph Surface: No, sir; but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Charles: Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

Joseph Surface: To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Charles: Who, I? O lud, not I, upon my word. Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he? Or, what's worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

Joseph Surface: This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh—

Charles: True, true, as you were going to say—Then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

Joseph Surface: [*Aloud.*] Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

Charles: To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy *to me; but, upon my soul, I never* gave her the least encouragement. Besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Joseph Surface: But, sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you—

Charles: Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action; but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way, and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father—

Joseph Surface: Well?

Charles: Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all. *But, brother, do you* know now that you surprise me exceedingly by naming me with Lady Teazle; for, i' faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

Joseph Surface: Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Charles: Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances—

Joseph Surface: Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

Charles: Egad, I'm serious! Don't you remember one day when I called here—

Joseph Surface: Nay, pr'ythee, Charles—

Charles: And found you together—

Joseph Surface: Zounds, sir, I insist—

Charles: And another time when your servant—

Joseph Surface: Brother, brother, a word with you! [*Aside.*] Gad, I must stop him.

Charles: Informed, I say, that—

Joseph Surface: Hush! I beg your [illegible] consented.

Charles. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

Joseph Surface Softly! There! [*P*[illegible] *to the closet*]

Charles· Oh, 'fore heaven, I'll have him out Sir Peter, come forth!

Joseph Surface No, no—

Charles I say, *Sir Peter,* [illegible] court! [*Pulls in Sir Peter*] [illegible]

old guardian! What, turn inquisitor and take evidence *incog.?*

Sir Peter: Give me your hand, Charles. I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph. 'Twas my plan.

Charles: Indeed!

Sir Peter: But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did. What I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Charles: Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more. [*Apart to Joseph.*] Wasn't it, Joseph?

Sir Peter: Ah, you would have retorted on him.

Charles: Ah, ay, that was a joke.

Sir Peter: Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

Charles: But you might as well have suspected him as me in this matter, for all that. [*Apart to Joseph.*] Mightn't he, Joseph?

Sir Peter: Well, well, I believe you.

Joseph Surface: [*Aside.*] Would they were both out of the room! [*Enter Servant and whispers Joseph.*]

Sir Peter: And in future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers. [*Exit Servant.*]

Joseph Surface: Gentlemen, I beg pardon. I must wait on you down stairs. Here is a person come on particular business.

Charles: Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Joseph Surface: [*Aside.*] They must not be left together.—I'll send this man away and return directly. [*Apart to Sir Peter and goes out.*] Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Sir Peter: [*Apart to Joseph.*] I! Not for the world.—Ah, Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Charles: Psha, he is too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

Sir Peter: No, no! Come, come! You wrong him. No, no, Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either, in that respect. [*Aside.*] I have a great mind to tell him. We should have such a laugh at Joseph.

Charles: Oh, hang him, he's a very anchorite, a young hermit.

Sir Peter: Hark'ee, you must not abuse him. He may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Charles: Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Peter: No, but—This way. [*Aside.*] Egad, I'll tell him.—Hark'ee, have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

Charles: I should like it, of all things.

Sir Peter: Then, i' faith, we will! I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called.

Charles: What! Joseph? You jest.

Sir Peter: Hush! A little French milliner, and the best of the jest is she's in the room now.

Charles: The devil she is!

Sir Peter: Hush, I tell you! [*Points.*]

Charles: Behind the screen? 'Slife let's unveil her!

Sir Peter: No, no, he's coming. You shan't, indeed!

Charles: Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

Sir Peter: Not for the world! Joseph will never forgive me.

Charles: I'll stand by you—

Sir Peter: Odds, here he is! [*Joseph Surface enters just as Charles Surface throws down the screen.*]

Charles: Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Peter: Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

Charles: Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret.

Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word! Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! Is morality dumb too? Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute!—Well, though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another; so I'll leave you to yourselves. [*Going.*] Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness Sir Peter, there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment! [*Exit Charles. They stand for some time looking at each other.*]

Joseph Surface· Sir Peter, notwithstanding—I confess, that appearances are against me,—if you will afford me your patience, I make no doubt—but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

Sir Peter: If you please, sir.

Joseph Surface· The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria,—I say, sir, Lady [illegible] —called here,—in order that—I might explain these pretensions; but on your coming,—being apprehensive,—as I said,—of your jealousy, she withdrew, and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

Sir Peter: A very clear account, upon my word, and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every particle of it.

Lady Teazle: For not one word of it, Sir Peter.

Sir Peter: How! Don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

Lady Teazle: There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

Sir Peter: I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am.

Joseph Surface: [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

Lady Teazle: Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

Sir Peter: Ay, let her alone, sir; you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

Lady Teazle: Hear me, Sir Peter! I came here on no matter relating to your ward and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came, seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

Sir Peter: Now, I believe the truth is coming, indeed.

Joseph Surface· The woman's mad!

Lady Teazle: No, sir; she has recovered her senses and your own arts have furnished her with the means. Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me, but the tenderness you expressed for me when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it has so penetrated to my heart that had I left this place without the same of this discovery my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend while he affected honorable addresses to his ward, I behold him now in a light so truly despicable that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him. [*Exit.*]

Joseph Surface. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, heaven knows—

Sir Peter That you are a villain, and so I leave you to your conscience. [*Exit.*]

Joseph Surface [*Following Sir Peter.*] You are too rash, Sir Peter. You shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to—[*Exit.*]

QUESTIONS ON ACT IV

1. How does Sheridan avoid oversimplifying the money-lending scenes in Acts III and IV? Or, to put the question in another way, how is the tension secured?
2. What is the complexity of meaning implied by the lines spoken by Sir Oliver just before his exit (p. 224 b, 32 ff.)?
3. What is accomplished by Scene ii?
4. In Scene iii what is the technical significance of Joseph's referring to a possible call from his brother (p. 225 a, 11–12)?
5. Note the reference to the screen early in the scene. Is the handling of this in any way comparable to Wilde's management of the fan?
6. Do you find *double entendre* in any of Joseph's remarks during the screen scene?
7. Is the means by which Joseph is got out of the room wholly satisfactory? Why does Sheridan want Joseph out of the room?
8. In movement, concentration, and climactic development, how does this act compare with the preceding ones?

ACT V

[SCENE I. The library.]

[*Enter Joseph Surface and Servant.*]

Joseph Surface: Mr. Stanley! And why should you think I would see him? You must know he comes to ask something.

Servant: Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Joseph Surface: Psha, blockhead! To suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations! Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

Servant: I will, sir. Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady—

Joseph Surface: Go, fool! [*Exit Servant.*] Sure, Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before. My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humor to listen to other people's distresses. I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley. —So here he comes and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself and put a little charity into my face, however. [*Exit.*] [*Enter Sir Oliver Surface and Rowley.*]

Sir Oliver: What, does he avoid us? That was he, was it not?

Rowley: It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break it to him.

Sir Oliver: Oh, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking.

Rowley: As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide; for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliver: Yet he has a string of charitable sentiments at his fingers' ends.

Rowley: Or, rather, at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver, for I believe there is no sentiment he has such faith in as that "Charity begins at home."

Sir Oliver: And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all.

Rowley: I doubt you'll find it so. But he's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and you know immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

Sir Oliver: True, and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Rowley: Without losing a moment. [*Exit.*]

Sir Oliver: I don't like the complaisance of his features. [*Enter Joseph Surface.*]

Joseph Surface: Sir, I beg you ten thousands pardons for keeping you a moment waiting. Mr. Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliver: At your service.

Joseph Surface: Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down—I entreat you, sir.

Sir Oliver: Dear sir,—there's no occasion. [*Aside.*] Too civil by half!

Joseph Surface: I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley, but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

Sir Oliver: I was, sir; so nearly that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

Joseph Surface: Dear sir, there needs no apology! He that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was of that class and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

Sir Oliver: If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

Joseph Surface: I wish he was, sir, with all my heart. You should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

Sir Oliver: I should not need one—my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty would enable you to become the agent of his charity.

Joseph Surface: My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy man, but

[illegible]

Joseph Surface: Your very obedient!

Sir Oliver: Sir, your most obsequious!

Joseph Surface: You may depend upon hearing from me whenever I can be of service.

Sir Oliver: Sweet sir, you are too good!

Joseph Surface: In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliver: Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant!

Joseph Surface: Sir, yours as sincerely!

Sir Oliver: [*Aside.*] Charles, you are my heir! [*Exit.*]

Joseph Surface: This is one bad effect of a good character; it invites application from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities, whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it, makes just as good a show and pays no tax. [*Enter Rowley.*]

Rowley: Mr. Surface, your servant! I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

Joseph Surface: Always happy to see Mr. Rowley. [*Reads the letter.*] Sir Oliver Surface! My uncle arrived!

Rowley: He is, indeed; we have just parted. Quite well after a speedy voyage and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

Joseph Surface: I am astonished!—William, stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone!

Rowley: Oh, he's out of reach, I believe.

Joseph Surface: Why did you not let me know this when you came in together?

Rowley: I thought you had particular business. But I must be gone to inform your brother and appoint him here to meet your uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

Joseph Surface: So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming. [*Aside.*] Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky!

Rowley: You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

Joseph Surface: Ah, I'm overjoyed to hear it.—[*Aside.*] Just at this time!

Rowley: I'll tell him how impatiently you expect him.

Joseph Surface: Do, do! Pray give him my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him. [*Exit Rowley.*] Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruellest piece of ill fortune. [*Exit.*]

[SCENE II. Sir Peter Teazle's.]

[*Enter Mrs. Candour and Maid.*]

Maid: Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

Mrs. Candour: Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

Maid: Yes, ma'am; but she begs you will excuse her.

Mrs. Candour: Do go again. I shall be glad to see her if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be in great distress. [*Exit Maid.*] Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers with the names of the parties at length before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses. [*Enter Sir Benjamin Backbite.*] Oh, Sir Benjamin, you have heard, I suppose—

Sir Benjamin: Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface—

Mrs. Candour: And Sir Peter's discovery—

Sir Benjamin: Oh, the strangest piece of business, to be sure!

Mrs. Candour: Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am so sorry for all parties, indeed.

Sir Benjamin: Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all; he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Candour: Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected:

Sir Benjamin: No, no, I tell you; Mr. Surface is the gallant.

Mrs. Candour: No such thing! Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

Sir Benjamin: I tell you I had it from one—

Mrs. Candour: And I have it from one—

Sir Benjamin. Who had it from one, who had it—

Mrs. Candour: From one immediately. But here comes Lady Sneerwell, perhaps she knows the whole affair. [*Enter Lady Sneerwell.*]

Lady Sneerwell. So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend Lady Teazle.

Mrs. Candour Ay, my dear friend, who would have thought—

Lady Sneerwell Well, there is no trusting appearances, though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.

Mrs. Candour: To be sure, her manners were a little too free, but then she was so young!

Lady Sneerwell And had, indeed, some good qualities

Mrs. Candour: So she had, indeed But have you heard the particulars?

Lady Sneerwell: No, but everybody says that Mr. Surface—

Sir Benjamin: Ay, there, I told you Mr. Surface was the man

Mrs. Candour. No, no; indeed, the assignation was with Charles

Lady Sneerwell: With Charles? You alarm me, Mrs. Candour!

Mrs. Candour: Yes, yes; he was the lover. Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the informer.

Sir Benjamin: Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not—

Mrs. Candour: Sir Peter's wound! Oh, mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

Lady Sneerwell. Nor I, not a syllable.

Sir Benjamin: No? What, no mention of the duel?

Mrs. Candour: Not a word

Sir Benjamin: Oh, yes. They fought before they left the room

Lady Sneerwell: Pray let us hear.

Mrs. Candour: Ay, do oblige us with the duel.

Sir Benjamin: "Sir," says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, "you are a most ungrateful fellow."

[illegible]

"A most ungrateful fellow; and old as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction"

Mrs. Candour: Ay, that must have been to Charles, for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should fight in his own house.

Sir Benjamin Gad's life, ma'am, not at all,—"giving me immediate satisfaction!" On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics and Charles after her calling out for hartshorn and water, then, madam, they began to fight with swords— [*Enter Crabtree*]

Crabtree: With pistols, nephew, pistols! I have it from undoubted authority.

Mrs. Candour. Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true?

Crabtree: Too true, indeed, madam, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded—

Sir Benjamin: By a thrust in second[1] quite through his left side—

Crabtree: By a bullet lodged in the thorax

Mrs. Candour: Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter!

Crabtree. Yes, madam, though Charles would have avoided the matter if he could

Mrs. Candour: I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Benjamin: My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

[1] A term denoting a position in fencing

Crabtree: But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude—

Sir Benjamin: That I told you, you know—

Crabtree: Do, nephew, let me speak! And insisted on immediate—

Sir Benjamin: Just as I said—

Crabtree: Odd's life, nephew, allow others to know something too! A pair of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come home the night before late from Salthill,[2] where he had been to see the Montem with a friend who has a son at Eton) so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

Sir Benjamin: I heard nothing of this.

Crabtree: Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took effect, as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but what is very extraordinary, the ball struck a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter[3] from Northamptonshire.

Sir Benjamin: My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

Lady Sneerwell: [*Aside.*] I am more interested in this affair than they imagine and must have better information. [*Exit.*]

Sir Benjamin: Ah, Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crabtree: Yes, yes, they certainly do say— But that's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Candour: But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

Crabtree: Oh, they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

Mrs. Candour: I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

Crabtree: Yes, yes; and I saw one of the faculty[4] enter just before me.

Sir Benjamin: Hey! Who comes here?

[2] A hill near Eton. [3] A letter heavy enough to require double postage fees. [4] Medical profession.

Crabtree: Oh, this is he, the physician, depend on't.

Mrs. Candour: Oh, certainly, it must be the physician; and now we shall know. [*Enter Sir Oliver Surface.*]

Crabtree: Well, doctor, what hopes?

Mrs. Candour: Ay, doctor, how's your patient?

Sir Benjamin: Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a smallsword?

Crabtree: A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred!

Sir Oliver: Doctor? A wound with a smallsword? And a bullet in the thorax?—Oons, are you mad, good people?

Sir Benjamin: Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

Sir Oliver: Truly, I am to thank you for my degree, if I am.

Crabtree: Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of his accident.

Sir Oliver: Not a word.

Crabtree: Not of his being dangerously wounded?

Sir Oliver: The devil he is!

Sir Benjamin: Run through the body—

Crabtree: Shot in the breast—

Sir Benjamin: By one Mr. Surface—

Crabtree: Ay, the younger—

Sir Oliver: Hey, what the plague! You seem to differ strangely in your accounts; however you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Sir Benjamin: Oh, yes, we agree there.

Crabtree: Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

Sir Oliver: Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation he is the most imprudent man alive, for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter. [*Enter Sir Peter Teazle.*] Odd's heart, Sir Peter, you are come in good time, I promise you, for we had just given you over.

Sir Benjamin: [*Aside to Crabtree.*] Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!

Sir Oliver: Why, man, what do you

out of bed with a smallsword through your body and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

Sir Peter: A smallsword and a bullet!

Sir Oliver: Ay! These gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor to make me an accomplice.

Sir Peter: Why, what is all this?

Sir Benjamin: We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

Sir Peter: [*Aside.*] So, so! All over the town already.

Crabtree: Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.

Sir Peter: Sir, what business is that of yours?

Mrs. Candour: Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied

Sir Peter: Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

Sir Benjamin However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

Sir Peter: Sir, sir, I desire to be master in my own house.

Crabtree: 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

Sir Peter: I insist on being left to myself. [illegible] going; and depend on't, we'll make the best report of it we can. [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter: Leave my house!

Crabtree: And tell how hardly you've been treated [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter: Leave my house!

Sir Benjamin: And how patiently you bear it. [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter: Fiends! Vipers! Furies! Oh, that their own venom would choke them!

Sir Oliver: They are very provoking indeed, Sir Peter. [*Enter Rowley.*]

Rowley: I heard high words. What has ruffled you, sir?

Sir Peter: Psha, what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Rowley: Well, I'm not inquisitive.

Sir Oliver: Well, Sir Peter, I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Sir Peter: A precious couple they are!

Rowley: Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver: Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Rowley: Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

Sir Oliver: And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowley: It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliver: Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age! But how's this, Sir Peter, you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise as I expected?

Sir Peter: Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Rowley: What, do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

Sir Peter: Psha! Plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Rowley: Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's so humbled that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Peter And does Sir Oliver know all this?

Sir Oliver: Every circumstance.

Sir Peter: What? Of the closet and the screen, hey?

Sir Oliver: Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter: 'Twas very pleasant.

Sir Oliver. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you. Ah! ah! ah!

Sir Peter. Oh, vastly diverting! Ha! ha! ha!

Rowley: To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter: Yes, yes, his sentiments! Ha! ha! ha! Hypocritical villain!

Sir Oliver: Ay, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter: Ha! ha! 'Twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

Sir Oliver: Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down! Ha! ha!

Sir Peter: Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down! Ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

Sir Oliver: But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend, though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

Sir Peter: Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my account. It does not hurt me at all. I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S—, Lady T—, and Sir P— will be so entertaining.

Rowley: Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools. But I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room. I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

Sir Oliver: Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.

Sir Peter: Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart, though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

Rowley: We'll follow. [*Exit Sir Oliver.*]

Sir Peter: She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Rowley: No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

Sir Peter: Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

Rowley: Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

Sir Peter: Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers evidently intended for Charles?

Rowley: A mere forgery, Sir Peter, laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

Sir Peter: I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

Rowley: Certainly.

Sir Peter: Though, when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more.

Rowley: Let them laugh and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

Sir Peter: I' faith, so I will! And, if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Rowley: Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion—

Sir Peter: Hold, Master Rowley! If you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment. I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE III. The library.]

[*Enter Joseph Surface and Lady Sneerwell.*]

Lady Sneerwell: Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles and, of course, no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me!

Joseph Surface: Can passion furnish a remedy?

Lady Sneerwell: No, nor cunning neither. Oh, I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

Joseph Surface: Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

Lady Sneerwell: Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

Joseph Surface: But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

Lady Sneerwell: Are you not the cause of it? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir Peter and supplanting his brother but you must endeavor to seduce his wife? I hate such an avarice of crimes. 'Tis an unfair monopoly and never prospers.

Joseph Surface. Well, I admit I have been to blame I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

Lady Sneerwell: No?

Joseph Surface You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met and that you still believe him faithful to us?

Lady Sneerwell: I do believe so.

Joseph Surface. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support?

Lady Sneerwell. This, indeed, might have assisted.

Joseph Surface: Come, come; it is not too late yet. [*Knocking at the door.*] But hark! This is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver. Retire to that room; we'll consult farther when he is gone.

Lady Sneerwell: Well, but if he should find you out, too?

Joseph Surface: Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake. And you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side.

Lady Sneerwell: I have no diffidence[1] of your abilities; only be constant to one roguery at a time. [*Exit.*]

Joseph Surface: I will, I will! So! 'Tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events, my character is so much better than Charles's that I certainly—Hey! What! This is not Sir Oliver but old Stanley again. Plague on't that he should return to tease me just now! I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here, and—[*Enter Sir Oliver Surface.*] Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

Sir Oliver: Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here and, though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

Joseph Surface: Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now; so I must beg—Come any other time and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

Sir Oliver: No. Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Joseph Surface: Zounds, sir! Then I must insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oliver: Nay, sir—

Joseph Surface: Sir, I insist on 't!—Here William, show this gentleman out. Since you compel me, sir, not one moment—This is such insolence! [*Going to push him out.*] [*Enter Charles Surface.*]

Charles: Heyday! What's the matter now? What the devil? Have you got hold of my little broker here! Zounds, brother, don't hurt little Premium What's the matter, my little fellow?

Joseph Surface So, he has been with you too, has he?

Charles To be sure, he has Why, he's as honest a little—But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Joseph Surface. Borrowing? No! But, brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every—

Charles: O Gad, that's true! Noll

[1] Doubt.

mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure!

Joseph Surface: Yet Mr. Stanley insists—

Charles: Stanley! Why his name's Premium.

Joseph Surface: No, sir, Stanley.

Charles: No, no, Premium!

Joseph Surface: Well, no matter which, but—

Charles: Ay, ay, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the same thing, as you say; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names besides A. B. at the coffee-house. [*Knocking.*]

Joseph Surface: 'Sdeath, here's Sir Oliver at the door! Now, I beg, Mr. Stanley—

Charles: Ay, ay, and I beg, Mr. Premium—

Sir Oliver: Gentlemen—

Joseph Surface: Sir, by heaven, you shall go!

Charles: Ay, out with him, certainly!

Sir Oliver: This violence—

Joseph Surface: Sir, 'tis your own fault.

Charles: Out with him, to be sure! [*Both forcing Sir Oliver out.*] [*Enter Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, Maria, and Rowley.*]

Sir Peter: My old friend, Sir Oliver—Hey! What in the name of wonder? Here are two dutiful nephews! Assault their uncle at a first visit!

Lady Teazle: Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

Rowley: Truly it was, for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no protection to you.

Sir Oliver: Nor of Premium either. The necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman; and, now, egad, I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors and being knocked down without being bid for.

Joseph Surface: Charles!

Charles: Joseph!

Joseph Surface: 'Tis now complete!

Charles: Very!

Sir Oliver: Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley, too, look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my bounty; and you know how gladly I would have regarded half my fortune as held in trust for him. Judge then my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of faith, charity, and gratitude!

Sir Peter: Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration if I had not myself found him to be mean, treacherous, and hypocritical.

Lady Teazle: And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call me to his character.

Sir Peter: Then, I believe, we need add no more. If he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment that he is known to the world.

Charles: [*Aside.*] If they talk this way to honesty, what will they say to me, by and by?

Sir Oliver: As for that prodigal, his brother there—

Charles: [*Aside.*] Ay, now comes my turn. The damned family pictures will ruin me!

Joseph Surface: Sir Oliver—uncle, will you honor me with a hearing?

Charles: [*Aside.*] Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little.

Sir Oliver: [*To Joseph.*] I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely?

Joseph Surface: I trust I could.

Sir Oliver: [*To Charles.*] Well, sir, and you could justify yourself, too, I suppose?

Charles: Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver: What? Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

Charles: True, sir; but they were family secrets and should not be mentioned again, you know.

Rowley: Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliver: Odd's heart, no more I can, nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do

[illegible]

Charles: To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may [illegible] say so if I was not, that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oliver: Charles, I believe you. Give me your hand again. The ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

Charles: Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady Teazle: Yet I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

Sir Oliver: Oh, I have heard of his attachment there, and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right, that blush—

Sir Peter: Well, child, speak your sentiments!

Maria: Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy. For me, whatever claim I had to his attention, I willingly resign to one [illegible] tery now! While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else, and now that he is likely to reform I'll warrant you won't have him!

Maria: His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know *the cause.*

Charles: Lady Sneerwell!

Joseph Surface: Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard for justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. [*Opens the door. Enter Lady Sneerwell.*]

Sir Peter: So! Another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room in the house, I suppose!

Lady Sneerwell: Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

Ch[illegible] Pray, uncle, is this another [illegible] For, as I have life, I don't [illegible]

Joseph Surface: I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Peter: And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake. Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Rowley: Walk in, Mr. Snake. [*Enter Snake.*] I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens unluckily that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

Lady Sneerwell: A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow, have you, too, conspired against me?

Snake: I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons. You paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question, but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

Sir Peter: Plot and counter-plot, egad!

Lady Sneerwell: The torments of shame and disappointment on you all!

Lady Teazle: Hold, Lady Sneerwell! Before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken in writing letters from me to Charles and answering them yourself, and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice and kills characters no longer.

Lady Sneerwell: You too, madam! Provoking! Insolent! May your husband live these fifty years! [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter: Oons, what a fury!

Lady Teazle: A malicious creature, indeed!

Sir Peter: Hey! Not for her last wish?

Lady Teazle: Oh, no!

Sir Oliver: Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

Joseph Surface: Sir, I am so confounded to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner to impose on us all that I know not what to say. However, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter: Moral to the last drop!

Sir Oliver: Ay, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar! Egad you'll do very well together.

Rowley: I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present?

Snake: Before I go, I beg pardon once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

Sir Peter: Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake: But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

Sir Peter: Hey! What the plague! Are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

Snake: Ah, sir, consider. I live by the badness of my character. I have nothing but my infamy to depend on; and, if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

Sir Oliver: Well, well, we'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise, never fear. [*Exit Snake.*]

Sir Peter: There's a precious rogue!

Lady Teazle: See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliver: Ay, ay, that's as it should be; and, egad, we'll have the wedding tomorrow morning.

Charles: Thank you, dear uncle.

Sir Peter: What, you rogue! Don't you ask the girl's consent first?

Charles: Oh, I have done that a long time—a minute ago, and she has looked *yes*.

Maria: For shame, Charles! I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word—

Sir Oliver: Well then, the fewer the better. May your love for each other never know abatement!

Sir Peter: And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do!

Charles: Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

Sir Oliver: You do, indeed, Charles.

Rowley: If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded, you would have been in my debt for the attempt; but deserve to be happy and you overpay me!

Sir Peter: Ay, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Charles: Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it. But here shall be my monitor, my gentle guide. Ah, can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, shouldst waive thy beauty's sway,
Thou still must rule, because I will obey.
An humble fugitive from Folly view,
No sanctuary near but love and you.

[*To the audience.*]

You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies, if you approve!

EPILOGUE

By Mr. Colman

Spoken by Lady Teazle

I, who was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade-wind must now blow all one way,
Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
To one dull, rusty weathercock,—my spouse!
So wills our virtuous bard,—the motley Bayes
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays!
Old bachelors who marry smart young wives

Learn from our play to regulate your lives;
Each bring his dear to town, all faults upon her,—
London will prove the very source of honor.
Plunged fairly in, like a cold bath it serves,
When principles relax, to brace the nerves
Such is my case; and yet I must deplore
That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er.
And say, ye fair, was ever lively wife,
Born with a genius for the highest life,
Like me untimely blasted in her bloom,
Like me condemned to such a dismal doom?
Save money, when I just knew how to waste it!
Leave London, just as I began to taste it!
Must I then watch the early-crowing cock,
The melancholy ticking of a clock;
In a lone rustic hall forever pounded,[1]
With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded?
With humble curate can I now retire,
(While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire)
And at backgammon mortify my soul,
That pants for loo or flutters at a vole?[2]
Seven's near the main![3] Dear sound that must expire,
Lost at hot cockles[4] round a Christmas fire.

[1] Confined in a pound [2] Loo, a game of cards, in which a vole was the taking of all the tricks [3] The "point" to be thrown in a game of dice, to throw seven was, of course, to lose [4] An old game.

The transient hour of fashion too soon spent.
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content![1]
Farewell the plumèd head, the cushioned tête,
That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
That spirit-stirring drum!—Card drums I mean,
Spadille, odd trick, pam, basto, king and queen!
And you, ye knockers, that with brazen throat
The welcome visitors' approach denote,
Farewell all quality of high renown,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town!
Farewell! Your revels I partake no more,
And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!
All this I told our bard; he smiled and said 'twas clear,
I ought to play deep tragedy next year.
Meanwhile he drew wise morals from his play,
And in these solemn periods stalked away:—
"Blessed were the fair like you, her faults who stopped,
And closed her follies when the curtain dropped!
No more in vice or error to engage
Or play the fool at large on life's great stage."

[1] Compare the passage which begins here with *Othello*, III, iii, 347–357

NOTES ON *THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL*

At the beginning of the play we suggested two methods of approach to the problem offered by Sheridan: first, a comparison of him with Wilde; second, an examination of *The School for Scandal* with especial reference to the sentimental style of comedy which was very influential at the time. Though the two methods constantly overlap, we may for the sake of convenience attempt a partial separation of the two. In making comparisons, also, we

may profitably include Plautus and other dramatists within the field of comparison. This two-way comparison should be enlightening.

I. SHERIDAN AND OTHER DRAMATISTS: STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS

Though we have spoken of both the Wilde and the Sheridan plays as satirical comedies, a little examination will reveal considerable difference between them. Wilde, as we saw, is primarily concerned with the conflict between society and a woman who has violated society's rules; in commenting on that conflict, he found that it suited his purpose to view society with a satirical eye. His satire, then, occupies a secondary position, although it appears throughout a large part of the play. Sheridan, on the other hand, clearly begins his play, and develops the greater part of it, with a satirical intention: most of the first two acts are concerned with the society whose vices he primarily intends to ridicule. His satire—at least initially—is in the foreground.

Theme and Form. As a result, Sheridan makes a different selection and arrangement of his basic materials from that which Wilde adopts: as a writer whose primary intention is satirical, he sets up a much sharper contrast among characters than does Wilde. Wilde's initial contrast of the social "ins" and the social "outs" becomes rapidly dissolved into a picture of humanity in which the distribution of moral and intellectual qualities takes no account of who is in and who is out. But Sheridan's primary arrangement of his characters into the "good" and the "bad" holds throughout the play, as it must do in an atmosphere in which satire is dominant. On the one hand we have the "villains"—the various gossips with their special abilities, and Joseph Surface, the hypocrite. (We can easily see to what extent Sheridan has used exaggeration, which is a regular part of the technique of satire, in his presentation of these people.) On the other hand we have Maria, the honest, decent person who sees through the gossips; Lady Teazle, who, at first deceived by the gossips, later is enlightened and helps satirize them; Sir Peter, whose role is approximately that of innocent bystander; and Charles, who is directly contrasted with Joseph. The other characters are essentially outside the main conflict, which they serve to comment upon or to judge. The management of the "good" people and the commentators sheds further light upon the technique of satire. One notices that all the "good" characters are in one way or other, at one time or another, victims of the "bad" characters; this is a standard satirical device, since our sympathy with the victims always strengthens our detestation of the victimizers. As for the observers or commentators, they also serve to heighten the point the author is making. (Wilde, by the way, makes use of no such characters. Sheridan perhaps felt that his point needed the additional strengthening which such a device would give.)

Characterization. What we have said so far suggests that Sheridan has depended somewhat upon the hard-and-fast segregation of characters into

good and bad which we associate with melodrama. There are indeed such resemblances to melodrama. Sheridan, of course, obviously tries to secure a redeeming complication of character: in a sense he starts out by saying that his characters "are not what they seem." Joseph seems a thoughtful, generous, honest man; he is actually the opposite. Charles seems an irresponsible and loose-lived playboy but he turns out to possess a redeeming generosity and candor. Thus in one sense both men are complex. Yet as we go further we realize that this complexity of character is somewhat synthetic: Joseph's "good" side is entirely imaginary, and Charles's "bad" side is insignificant. One is plain bad, the other good. Actually, therefore, it appears that Sheridan's characters are conceived at a less mature level than Wilde's. In Wilde's play, for example, neither Lady W. nor Mrs. Erlynne is wholly justified. In a crude paraphrase of the play such as we have made here, of course, Sheridan is likely to sound worse than he is; in the full play, the naïveté implied by this blueprint is to a considerable extent overcome by Sheridan's wit and suavity. But our oversimplified blueprint is justified if it allows us to see how he achieves his effects—and in spite of what handicaps.

Focus. Notice how Sheridan, with almost twice as many characters as [illegible] even provide most of the materials for the gossips, who are related to the intention of the play in a far more integral manner than are Barnwell's friends in the Lillo play. On the other hand, we notice that Sheridan is not quite so successful as Wilde in subordinating everything to the principal characters. He is very fond of complications that have a way of getting out of hand and befogging the central issues. Joseph is engaged in a variety of pursuits which constantly need clarifying (see for instance, his speech which closes Act II. ii); Lady Sneerwell's implausible passion for Charles is an avoidable excrescence; the Teazles tend to get too much into the limelight; Sir Oliver, Stanley, Moses, and Trim extend our interest in still other directions. Yet this tendency, it must be remarked, is less of an esthetic handicap than it would be in tragedy, which by its nature requires unremitting attention to the mind and soul of the protagonist. Comedy, as we have seen in our analysis of Wilde's play, is concerned primarily with the operations of society; therefore, having less need of intensity and depth, it can risk a greater spread of interest than can tragedy.

Sheridan and Farce. When we compare Sheridan's play with that of Plautus, certain obvious differences emerge. Plautus, as we have seen, keeps our attention focused on the confusion and hurly-burly, whereas Sheridan focuses our attention on character. As we move from plays in which farce-elements predominate to those which more truly deserve the name of comedy, we ascend into the realm of meaningfulness. For example, compare the marital troubles of Menaechmus with those of the Teazles. The former result from a mistake and mean nothing; the latter provides an

index to the social life which Sheridan is satirizing. Sheridan does not ask us to feel amused simply because a husband and wife quarrel with each other; the quarrel is amusing, to be sure, but it is amusing, finally, because it reflects the characters of the two people and the nature of the society which influences them.

To illustrate with another comparison, consider the "screen scene" (IV. iii), which on the face of it certainly depends a good deal on physical or external situation, that is, upon Plautus's own favorite device. Sheridan, it is true, has made some effort to prepare for the various calls upon Joseph (can you find the evidence?). Yet the fact remains that he has to depend heavily upon coincidence (1) to get Lady Teazle, Sir Peter, and Charles all present in the right order; (2) to get Joseph out; (3) to bring Joseph in again at the climactic moment. Yet the scene as a whole is highly successful—and on the level of comedy rather than that of farce. It will be interesting to try to see why. The wit of the Joseph-Lady Teazle scene, for one thing, serves to keep us conscious of characters and ideas rather than of physical movements and, so to speak, of scene-shifting; that is, there is a minimum of emphasis on the mechanics involved in contriving the scene, and our attention is rapidly focused on the scene itself. But what serves more importantly to "save" the scene is its symbolic value: the scene becomes a *perfect embodiment of Joseph's basic duplicity, of his being all things to all men*. That is, it is meaningful; it is more than an artificial device meant to bring about the sort of farcical surprises and confusion upon which Plautus depends. Furthermore, development within the scene, the movement forward, are the result of the direct interaction of the characters, not, as in some other parts of the play, of a third person's plotting. Charles's accusations of Joseph follow quite naturally upon Joseph's remarks to him about Lady Teazle; these accusations compel Joseph to confess that Sir Peter is in hiding; Charles's high spirits and sense of humor account plausibly for the disclosure of Sir Peter. Thus, Sheridan has logically and plausibly brought about the situation necessary for the climax of the scene. And that climax comes through the character of Sir Peter rather than through some mechanical device. Finally, any feeling we might have that all this is contrived is pretty well submerged in our awareness of the admirable succession of ironies; Sir Peter's inconsistently being willing to forgive an irregularity and then discovering something he can't forgive; his wanting to play a trick on Joseph but actually bringing pain to himself; Joseph's being found guilty of what Charles was suspected of. Plautus's farce—and indeed farce in general—fails to make use of such dramatic irony.

In fact, by virtue of its symbolic significance, Sheridan's scene is probably more effective than the corresponding scene in Act III of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. For Wilde's scene, as we have said (see p. 64), stresses rather the *threat of discovery* than *presentation of character*.

Melodramatic Tendencies. We have seen, however, that Sheridan does exhibit some tendency to use the devices of melodrama. In one respect, for

instance, he works like Plautus: he depends rather heavily upon the discovery of certain *matters of fact.* In the screen scene itself there is a rather (1)
mechanical disclosure of information—for instance, that about Sir Peter's deed to his wife. Farce and melodrama are always fond of such "discoveries." The tendency to rely upon discoveries, the manipulation of wills and deeds, and the like, naturally leads away from character and away, indeed, from the direct interaction or conflict of character. Even in *The School for Scandal,* for all of its admirable quality, this distraction occurs. The issue between Charles and Joseph is not really settled by a series of 2
clashes between them comparable to the series of meetings between Mrs. [illegible] this paraphrase, to mitigate it by the wit and satirical impact of the last act (just as he succeeds in mitigating the dependence on sheer coincidence [illegible] first comes in disguise—a standard expedient of melodrama.*

To say that there are melodramatic elements in *The School for Scandal* is not, of course, finally to condemn the play. But it should indicate that the author tends to do things superficially rather than profoundly. For it is very easy indeed to have a character like Sir Oliver who not only gets everything straight but also has the power to set everything straight. It is certainly easier for the dramatist to do this than to let the characters, as it were, fight it out among themselves, and to have the outcome determined entirely by the clash of their minds and personalities. It would be finer drama still to indicate the inner development of the characters as a result of the impact of circumstances and conflict upon them. When we consider 3
these possibilities, we can see that Sheridan's way of settling matters by an easy, external device such as the winning of a legacy does not really settle them at all but rather tends to evade the real issue

In Wilde's play, on the other hand, we have seen that matters of fact (for instance, Mrs. Erlynne's identity) are subordinated to matters of understanding (the matter of Mrs. Erlynne's character and personality). Wilde offers us direct clashes: between Mrs. Erlynne and the Windermeres. There is no know-it-all and fix-it-all, there is no easy way out, no master solution. There is greater complexity, better dramatic logic. This is not to say, of course, that Wilde always sticks to the strait and narrow path of character-delineation. As we have seen, he definitely tends, in his third Act, to deviate from his study of Lady Windermere to a "rescue" of Lady Windermere, so that the effects are precisely those of melodrama (the

* The student should consult, in Appendix A, the analysis of Morton's *Speed the Plough*, a play which exemplifies the use of typical devices of melodrama

situation is not unlike Sir Oliver's rescue of Charles). But Wilde does finally pull the play back into line, and the final note is upon Lady Windermere's growth in wisdom. Mrs. Erlynne comes out comfortably enough: at least she is not punished. But Sheridan tends to justify one side completely (except for a casual renunciation of his former conduct by Charles) and to reject the other completely.

Despite, however, some reliance on melodramatic method, Sheridan is much less crude than he might be; if Sir Oliver is the *deus ex machina*, he is at least not used to mystify and surprise us. His arrival is prepared for in I. i; and, as a matter of fact, the announcement functions ironically in that Joseph refuses to believe a report which might have helped him a good deal. Here Sheridan certainly relinquishes a standard privilege of melodrama. He actually takes us backstage with Sir Oliver and lets us relish the ironic situations into which Sir Oliver puts other people. An author content with mere melodrama would keep us in the dark; Sheridan strives for illuminating ironies. The former is content to shock; the latter wants to enlighten. Here the constant wit is his ally; it suggests mental alertness in the characters rather than the mere susceptibility to sensational effect characteristic of melodrama.

Another similarity to melodrama, yet with a difference, is Sheridan's Rowley—a too-easy stage standby, the old-faithful servitor, who sees all, hears all, knows all, and arranges all; he comes from what is called "intrigue comedy"—a kind of comedy of situation. When Rowley enlightens Oliver on the Surface situation (II. iii) or Sir Peter on his wife's change of heart (V. ii), Sheridan is really avoiding the problem—and the more probable situation—of having characters acquire essential knowledge the hard way, by themselves (note the means by which Lady Windermere comes to understand Mrs. Erlynne: there is no intermediary). That would take more effort and skill, and the tone would be less trivial. But though Sheridan takes the easy way, he is still unwilling to depend wholly on the easy, but essentially undramatic, way: Sir Oliver does go on to make his own tests, however thorough or valid these tests may or may not be.

2. SHERIDAN'S ATTITUDE: THEME: THE SENTIMENTAL TENDENCY

The latter half of the play is concerned with the means by which Sir Oliver tests and judges his nephews, that is, with his conception of good and bad conduct. Hence we must consider what the action implies about the author's point of view. This subject will bring us, also, to a consideration of the second general point which we mentioned at the beginning of this discussion, namely, Sheridan's relationship to the sentimental drama which was very popular in his day.

So far we have been considering Sheridan's dramatic methods. What has been already implied in most of this discussion is the fact that he is writing social satire. When we say this, we automatically say something

about his point of view: Sheridan is discerning enough to detect, beneath the accepted normal conduct of society, a pettiness, vindictiveness, and hypocrisy which he finds deserving of satire. In his satire of Joseph we must note the especial use he makes of Joseph's "sentiments"—the point at which he first runs counter to what may be called the "sentimental tradition." These sentiments are generalized statements implying a strong sense of duty or propriety in the speaker; in the drama of the period which stressed edification, this kind of speech was frequently uttered by the characters meant to be admired. (We have already noticed the tendency in *The London Merchant*.) In giving such speeches to a hypocrite, therefore, Sheridan is obviously having a little fun with the sentimental tradition (Lady Sneerwell calls Joseph a "sentimental knave"). We can go on to look for other influences of that tradition.

Let us see what Sheridan has to say when he is speaking positively rather than negatively. A convenient introduction to the subject lies in the way Sir Oliver expresses his approval or disapproval.

Sir Oliver's Reward. Sir Oliver says, first of all, that if Charles pleases him, he will "compound for his extravagance" (II iii). Charles has been counting on Sir Oliver's money (III. i, III. iii) Act III is almost entirely concerned with pecuniary matters Twice again Sir Oliver speaks of paying Charles's debts (IV ii, V i), and he implies that Joseph is going to be cut off without a shilling (V iii). So, although the final note is one of happy love, the major issue—hypocrisy—is dealt with largely in terms of monetary loss and gain Now the effect of this is to give a tone of triviality which all the wit and satirical insight cannot quite obscure If, as we are bound to feel, the author can think only in terms of a money reward, can we take his judgment of human values very seriously? Is he at the level of comedy of character or of farce (like the *Menaechmi*), where everything depends on *changes in external situation?* Again, what conception of human excellence is it that can be adequately expressed in terms of a pounds-and-shillings pay-off? It might be argued that we are taking the matter of inheritance too literally and that this inheritance should be regarded only as symbol. But we should have to reply that it is the wrong kind of symbol, it can denote only a trivial, commercial view of life Further, it is doubtful whether the acquisition or loss of money, unless it represents an act of will, can symbolize an inner condition at all As used in this play, the money simply shows the attitude of another person (Sir Oliver), who may or may not be right.

The Treatment of Charles. That brings us to the distinction between the brothers. In Joseph, Sheridan presents his belief that the proprieties and conventions may conceal very bad behavior; in Charles, that the absence of the conventional virtues may not mean the absence of such real virtues as candor, honesty, "goodness of heart."

In his presentation of Charles, Sheridan shows his method of dealing with a problem that confronts every satirist: the need of presenting, directly or by suggestion, his conception of the positive good from which the satire

works (consider, for instance, the passages in which the authors of two famous satires, Swift's *A Modest Proposal* and Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, indicate what they think are sound values for the societies which they ridicule). Unless he makes some such indication, the author may seem to present a despairing or cynical view of a wholly vicious world. He needs a foil of some kind; it is the main source of his dramatic tension. In dealing with the gossips Sheridan finds his foil in Maria, who is truthful and sensible; and Sir Peter makes a significant speech insisting on the relationship between wit and good nature (II. ii). But in dealing with Joseph, Sheridan not only finds a foil in Charles's honesty and unpretentiousness, which would do all that is needed; but he also goes on to give Charles a "good heart," which shows itself in fine feelings and generous actions. This appears especially in his generosity to "Stanley." Is this convincing? Or does it seem that the author is manipulating matters to create a sharp, high-lighted contrast with Joseph? Does not this bring us to the verge of comedy of situation? Further, does not this bring us very close to sentimental comedy? Consider the following matters:

1. In showing Charles's generosity and his final "reform," the author is directly displaying what is admirable, what is "virtuous," rather than keeping our attention upon what is ridiculous. Joseph becomes secondary to Charles, instead of *Charles's being secondary to Joseph, as satire demands*. Now this is precisely the pattern of sentimental comedy. Or, to put it in another way, we might say that this is a case of comedy's getting out of its relativistic world and endeavoring to make ethical pronouncements of a sort that are esthetically satisfactory only in the wholly different atmosphere of tragedy (see the section entitled "The Nature of Comedy" in the analysis of Wilde's play). Though this whole point may be very concisely stated, it should not be underemphasized, for it goes to the heart of the sentimental comedy that has flourished from Richard Steele in the eighteenth century to Saroyan in the twentieth: we are asked to admire the good rather than laugh at the bad. In its worst forms this method leads us into a very simple view of life: "Just see how good the world is after all." When we speak of a thing as "sentimental" we always mean, among other things, that it treats matters in entirely too simple a way.

2. In using this pattern, Sheridan is appealing less to the audience's sense of the laughable, less to their good sense, we might say, or, as the eighteenth century would have said, to their "judgment," than to their feelings, to an unconsidered emotional *relish* of kindness and good-heartedness. This is the psychological pattern that sentimental comedy follows. In its least restrained form this method results in simply pointing out delightful examples of kindness and goodheartedness and in rejecting any complexities that might interfere with the zestful inhaling of the fragrance of the examples. It is possible, indeed, that most sentimentality functions in this way. Notice that, like farce, it demands that the reader respond to situations in a very naïve way.

3. Finally, notice that Sheridan makes Charles's good actions come not from his reason and will, or from any training or discipline of which we are aware, but simply from his feelings, which, we must assume, are a sort of natural gift that functions autonomously. For, though this may seem rather surprising to the reader, the evidence suggests that Sheridan actually distrusts reason and finds the "good heart" a safer guide to action. Notice that it is Joseph who possesses powers of reason, not Charles; and that Sheridan makes Joseph use his reason entirely as an aid to selfish and acquisitive designs. Thus Sheridan says, dramatically, that reason is untrustworthy; conversely, by endowing Charles with feelings that on the whole lead him to pleasing and generous conduct, he demonstrates his conviction that feelings may be relied on in the conduct of life. This is what is often called sentimental ethics—which, as we have already seen, tends to interfere with proper comic effects (this aspect of the play should be compared with Congreve's *Way of the World*, which does not make a point of admiring, and finding goodness in, unreasonableness). Now when an author implicitly sets forth a code of conduct, he naturally invites us to consider the quality of his thought, its thoroughness. We need not attempt, of course, to give a final answer to the question· Are the feelings a trustworthy guide to conduct? The problem is one of vast philosophical extent. But we may ask how the quality of the thought affects the play, and whether Sheridan's theme is convincing in terms of the play. Consider Charles's gift to Stanley, suppose, for the sake of argument, that it is plausible. Still, is it enough to indicate that Charles is fundamentally a well-conducted person? Is an act of charity a guarantee of general decency? Does it compensate adequately for other failures in conduct? Or is it a pleasant gesture misleading us to draw a general conclusion which the evidence will not support? Is it not possible even to argue that Charles's gesture is a piece of self-deception, and that what appears as generosity may actually be prompted by a relish of sensation which might just as well lead him into conduct less admirable from a conventional [illegible] What about [illegible] and gambl[illegible] feelings wo[illegible] women to a party which [illegible] is written [illegible] song? [illegible] which [illegible] of his sub[illegible] and gambling, we should of course not be unduly solemn about them and treat them as though they were irrevocably vicious. That is not the point The point is that Charles relies on his feelings, which for a long time have kept him [illegible] will they be easily c[illegible] sides pleasant feelin[illegible] of youthful follies [illegible] upon him? And the happy outcome of his escapades leading him to feel that he should go right on with youthful follies? Is Sheridan, then, unconsciously whitewashing Charles?

Aside from his generosity to Stanley, Charles proves his quality only by refusing to sell Sir Oliver's picture. But is not Sir Oliver rather hasty in reaching conclusions? Is not this actually a case of a "sentiment" as evidence of general probity? Might not Sir Oliver just as reasonably disinherit Charles because Charles rudely pushes him out in Act V. iii? In fact, it appears that Sheridan actually set up, but failed to use, a good opportunity to satirize Sir Oliver also.

One of Charles's key speeches is the next-to-last in Act IV. i, where he praises Generosity and disparages Justice. Charles's rather flattering picture of himself, plus his eagerness "for hazard," may leave us in some doubt about his deserving great plaudits. And will his thinking bear examination? It happens that just about a decade before the play, Goldsmith had written *The Good-Natured Man*, a play which provides some very shrewd commentary on just this theme of Generosity vs. Justice. Goldsmith's hero is also in trouble—but *because* of his good heart (and lack of sense) and *not in spite of it;* and he is also rescued, not because of his good heart, but in spite of it, and upon his recognition that good sense is an important ingredient in adult behavior.

So even in his satire of sentimentalism Sheridan is not wholly able to escape its effects. It influences him just enough to prevent his treating the subject with completeness and maturity. On the other hand, he is by no means victimized by sentimentalism; even in the Charles-Joseph action there is so much wit that some of the less successful parts are concealed. The appeal of Charles's witty gaiety is strong, and Joseph's wit prevents his being the tritely sinister melodrama-villain. Notice his attempted seduction of Lady Teazle (IV. iii), where the stress is not on sex nor on her danger (as it would be in melodrama) but on the extraordinary logic of Joseph, and where the effect depends upon the brilliantly paradoxical use of reason in behalf of conduct which reason might be expected to oppose. Joseph's cleverness, you will note, draws attention from his intentions to the working of his mind; his speech on "conscious innocence" is itself rather satirical of a kind of sentimental literature; add his suavity, and you find Joseph here a character of considerable picaresque appeal, and certainly one of greater complexity than a "straight" villain.

3. OTHER INFLUENCES ON THE TONE

If the play consisted entirely of the Joseph-Charles action, its reputation as comedy would certainly be less than it is. But much of the effect depends upon the treatment of the gossips. True, their connection with the Surface-plot is not very convincing; the professed passions of Backbite and Lady Sneerwell are hardly real. But the very unreality of any emotions save love of gossip is a means of excluding any suggestion of the sentimental and of keeping a tone of brilliant satire. The gossips determine the tone of all Act I until, at the end, Rowley's part suggests the sentimental; but his part is overshadowed by Sir Peter's domestic trouble and his ironic cocksureness

about the Surfaces. Note how irony always acts as an antidote for sentimentality. Again, Act II is composed almost entirely of satirical materials, except for some lines praising Charles. Note how much less effective these lines are than the anti-Joseph speeches.

Try to decide which parts of the rest of the play tend toward, or work against, a sentimental effect; note especially the big satirical scenes—of Joseph's hypocrisy (IV. iii) and of the gossips' lying (V. ii). Note how Sheridan gets speed and drive in the latter scene; how skillfully interruptions are used to suggest the irresistible pressure of rival minds pushing into an orgy of gossip. Consider the paradoxical fact that the gossips' almost disinterested, artistic devotion to making a good story gives them a kind of admirableness, just as, throughout the play, their wit makes them something more than the simple, hateful villains of melodrama. Thus Sheridan achieves a kind of balance.

Note the means primarily used to secure the satirical effect of the final gossip scene (V. ii): (1) It depends upon the reader's [illegible] irony of the continuous unfolding of the gossips' mendacity; without this knowledge he could experience merely a short-lived, and much less meaningful, shock or surprise, which is characteristic of melodrama and exists largely for its own sake. We can also [illegible] "expectation" rather than "surprise." (2) When Sneerwell says that she "must have better information," she climaxes the satire: the gossips have been repudiated by one of themselves.

Now, when we put together the fact that we have seen a skillful exposition of unscrupulous scandalmongering and the contrasting fact that the scandalmongers have done their job with a captivating zeal and imaginativeness, we see, not an easy black-and-white presentation, but a picture of such complexity as to explain in considerable part the durability of the play: or, in other words, the work of an author who combines artistic detachment and moral perception and so avoids the opposite extremes of moralizing on the one hand and indifference on the other.

Note that, except for several aspects of the treatment of Charles (e.g., his "reform"), Sheridan keeps Act V. iii on a very firm comic level. Indeed, Charles appears at his most consistent when he helps Joseph throw out Sir Oliver instead of "goodheartedly" protecting "little Premium." Sneerwell and Joseph are kept consistent; the former is given a brilliant final exit, as is Snake, with his paradoxical insistence that his good deed be kept secret. If Charles "reforms," at least the others do not.

SUMMARY

Sheridan, as we have seen, does not satirize gossip and hypocrisy with equal success. In dealing with gossip he is content with the standard comic method of presenting the vice and implying the opposite virtue. But in dealing with hypocrisy he tries to present a complete alternative way of life, that is, to make Charles a "hero" instead of letting him stay at the level of suggestion at which we see Maria. Thus he interferes with his tone: we are asked to admire rather than laugh—the mode of sentimental comedy. Further, since he is true enough to the nature of comedy to do Joseph at full-length, Sheridan lacks space in which to present Charles's virtue convincingly. Again, the desire to contrast the brothers sharply has led him to impute to Charles habits which we are not sure, as a matter of consistency of character, can be so easily dismissed. These matters, plus the fact that the judgment between Joseph and Charles is made largely in monetary terms, push Sheridan closer to comedy of situation than to comedy of character. Unsatisfactory, too, is the fact that the deciding judgment of Charles is not objective and disinterested; essentially, Sir Oliver is flattered into deciding that Charles is a fine fellow. Finally, we note that in so far as there is any mental activity in the play, it is Joseph's; Charles functions entirely in terms of feeling. Sheridan comes very close to stating outright that he does not believe in intelligence.

QUESTIONS

1. Sir Peter is presented as a comparatively innocent victim of the gossip circle. But at the same time he is shown as an irascible, dogmatic husband. Is anything gained by this? What would be the effect if he were presented as a thoroughly admirable husband?

2. What is the purpose of having Sir Peter mistaken in his judgment of Joseph and Charles? Is there any relationship between Sir Peter's function in this part of the plot and his function in the plot concerned primarily with the gossips? What is the justification for giving Sir Peter a relatively large part in the play? Is it too large?

3. Joseph Wood Krutch, the well-known modern critic, has referred to Sheridan's treatment of Lady Teazle as a "notorious whitewashing." Do you agree with this judgment? Consider her final speech in Act IV as well as the situation in the latter part of Act V. ii.

4. We have spoken of Sheridan's satire as having two objectives—gossip and hypocrisy. There are, of course, various mechanical connections between the gossips and the hypocritical Joseph (a study of all these mechanical connections will illustrate the complexity of the plot). What more fundamental relationship is there between them? At the same time, what different views of life are implied by the conduct of each?

5. Has Sheridan characterized the different gossips sufficiently to permit

us to make clear distinctions among them? What distinguishing marks can you find?

6. Throughout Acts I and II there is a sequence of remarks about ill-nature and good-nature. The regular recurrence of these terms suggests that they are there for a purpose. How do they contribute to the development of the theme?

7. Study Sheridan's use of soliloquies throughout the play. Do any of them seem justifiable dramatic devices? Do any of them seem hastily seized upon as the easiest means of exposition?

8. Does the contrast between Charles and Joseph seem too simple and symmetrical? Do they represent a logical scheme rather than sufficiently complex human beings?

9. We have said that Sheridan creates almost no direct clash between Charles and Joseph. He might have developed such a clash out of a rivalry for Maria. Why might he have avoided this method?

10. At different times both Sir Peter and Rowley give Sir Oliver characterizations of his nephews. Aside from the mere fact that they have different opinions, how does one such scene of assurance differ from another in tone?

11. What is the relationship between the literary satire (in Acts I. i, II. ii, and other scenes where Backbite is present) and the other satirical parts of the play? Or is the literary satire irrelevant?

12. Note how very late in the play Charles makes his entrance. Major characters in a play often do not come in at the start. Can you find any justification for this?

13. The satire of usury in Act III seems rather far removed from the main issue of the play. Could you, however, make a case for it as related to the satire of the gossips or of Joseph? Consider the points made by Moses in Act III. i.

14. Analyze the wit of Sneerwell's command to Joseph in Act V. iii: "only be constant to one roguery at a time."

15. In Act V. ii note the very minute details with which the gossips embellish their imaginary tales Why are these details effective? Analyze especially Crabtree's final speech before Lady Sneerwell's exit. What is Sheridan's reason for making Candour say what she does just before Backbite's entry near the beginning of the scene? (p. 234 b, 31 ff.)

16. What is the dramatic function of Joseph's extreme politeness in Act V. i? Consider how much the effectiveness of this scene depends upon facts which the reader knows but which Joseph does not know.

17. In the early part of Act V. iii how does Sheridan avoid sentimentality in the relations between Charles and Stanley (Sir Oliver)? After the exposure, when Charles protests how glad he is to see Sir Oliver and Sir Oliver believes him, is the reader convinced that Sheridan has actually presented a cause capable of producing the given effect?

18. Analyze the effectiveness of Snake's lines at the end.

3. Ibsen, *Rosmersholm*

ROSMERSHOLM (1886) is an almost immediate contemporary of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, and the student may therefore find it useful to make some rough comparisons as he reads. We find each play, for instance, depending at least in part on a clash between an individual and a social group; but—with a diversity of method that should be interesting to observe—one is comedy, the other moves toward tragedy. There are, besides, two other respects in which the plays are eligible for comparison.

Ibsen is often said to have ended the reign of the "well-made" play, by which, as we saw, Wilde was influenced. That is, he got rid of many artificial technical devices for advancing action and producing effects, devices which often seem to us not "well-made" at all. He aspired instead to a more simple, natural, lifelike presentation of his themes (for instance, he worked very hard to manage all his exposition without the asides and soliloquies that we see in both Wilde and Sheridan), and in that respect he was vastly influential on a great deal of the drama of the subsequent half-century. As he reads, the student should try to estimate whether Ibsen does seem to have his play moving ahead in an easier and more plausible way than Wilde.

Again, both plays are often thought of as "problem plays"—that is, plays that focus attention on some particular problem which especially concerned the society of the time. There is a sense, of course, in which every play deals with a problem, and every play must reflect in some degree the thinking of its time. But the term "problem play" is used in a more special sense to denote a topical interest, with the further implication that the dramatist is using his play as a social and political instrument to direct the attention of society to its problems and to stir it to adopt a solution. It is certainly true that under Ibsen's influence succeeding dramatists have tended to give the problem play this narrower meaning.

But we shall do well to consider whether any really profoundly conceived play exhausts its meaning when it is taken as a mere tract, and whether any really great play does not have to transcend the framework of ideas of its own time. Moreover, Ibsen himself disclaimed more than once any intention of dealing merely or even primarily with "problems." Rather, he said, it is the dramatist's business to ask questions instead of answering them. He wrote specifically of his *Hedda Gabler:* "It was not my desire to deal in this play with so-called problems. What I wanted to do was to depict human beings, human emotions, and human destinies, upon a groundwork of certain of the social conditions and principles of the present day." The student will find it of interest to see whether this remark seems also to cover Ibsen's purpose in *Rosmersholm.*

ROSMERSHOLM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

JOHANNES ROSMER of Rosmersholm, formerly clergyman of the parish.
REBECCA WEST, in charge of Rosmer's household.
RECTOR[1] KROLL, Rosmer's brother-in-law.
ULRIC BRENDEL.
PETER MORTENSGÅRD.[2]
MADAM HELSETH, housekeeper at Rosmersholm.

The action takes place at Rosmersholm, an old family seat near a small coast town in the west of Norway.

[1] "Rector" in the Scotch and Continental sense of headmaster of a school, not in the English sense of a beneficed clergyman. [2] Pronounce *Mortensgore.*

ACT FIRST

[Sitting-room at Rosmersholm; spacious, old-fashioned, and comfortable In front, on the right, a stove decked with fresh birch-branches and wild flowers. Farther back, on the same side, a door. In the back wall, folding-doors opening into the hall. To the left, a window, and before it a stand with flowers and plants. Beside the stove a table with a sofa and easy chairs. On the walls, old and more recent portraits of clergymen, officers, and government officials in uniform. The window is open; so are the door into the hall and the house door beyond. Outside can be seen an avenue of fine old trees, leading up to the house. It is a summer evening, after sunset.]

[*Rebecca West is sitting in an easy-chair by the window, and crocheting a large white woollen shawl, which is nearly finished. She now and then looks out expectantly through the leaves of the plants. Madam Helseth presently enters from the right.*]

Madam Helseth: I suppose I had better begin to lay the table, Miss?

Rebecca West: Yes, please do The Pastor must soon be in now.

Madam Helseth: Don't you feel the draught, Miss, where you're sitting?

Rebecca: Yes, there is a little draught. Perhaps you had better shut the window. [*Madam Helseth shuts the door into the hall, and then comes to the window.*]

Madam Helseth: [*About to shut the window, looks out.*] Why, isn't that the Pastor over there?

Rebecca: [*Hastily.*] Where? [*Rises.*] Yes, it is he. [*Behind the curtain.*] Stand aside—don't let him see us.

Madam Helseth [*Keeping back from the window.*] Only think, Miss—he's beginning to take the path by the mill again.

Rebecca. He went that way the day before yesterday too [*Peeps out between the curtains and the window-frame.*] But let us see whether—

Madam Helseth Will he venture across the foot-bridge?

Rebecca That is what I want to see. [*After a pause.*] No, he is turning. He is going by the upper road again [*Leaves the window.*] A long way round.

Madam Helseth: Dear Lord, yes. No wonder the Pastor thinks twice about setting foot on that bridge A place where a thing like that has happened—

Rebecca. [*Folding up her work*] They cling to their dead here at Rosmersholm

Madam Helseth Now *I* would say, Miss, that it's the dead that clings to Rosmersholm.

Rebecca [*Looks at her*] The dead?

Madam Helseth Yes, it's almost as if they couldn't tear themselves away from the folk that are left

Rebecca What makes you fancy that?

Madam Helseth: Well, if it wasn't for that, there would be no White Horse, I suppose.

Rebecca: Now what is all this about the White Horse, Madam Helseth?

Madam Helseth: Oh, I don't like to talk about it. And, besides, you don't believe in such things.

Rebecca: Do you believe in it, then?

Madam Helseth: [*Goes and shuts the window.*] Oh, you'd only be for laughing at me, Miss. [*Looks out.*] Why, isn't that Mr. Rosmer on the mill-path again—?

Rebecca: [*Looks out.*] That man there? [*Goes to the window.*] No, that's the Rector!

Madam Helseth: Yes, so it is.

Rebecca: This is delightful. You may be sure he's coming here.

Madam Helseth: He goes straight over the foot-bridge, he does. And yet she was his sister, his own flesh and blood. Well, I'll go and lay the table then, Miss West. [*She goes out to the right. Rebecca stands at the window for a short time; then smiles and nods to some one outside. It begins to grow dark.*]

Rebecca: [*Goes to the door on the right.*] Oh, Madam Helseth, you might let us have some little extra dish for supper. You know what the Rector likes best.

Madam Helseth: [*Outside.*] Oh yes, Miss, I'll see to it.

Rebecca: [*Opens the door to the hall.*] At last—! How glad I am to see you, my dear Rector.

Rector Kroll: [*In the hall, laying down his stick.*] Thanks. Then I am not disturbing you?

Rebecca: You? How can you ask?

Kroll: [*Comes in.*] Amiable as ever. [*Looks around.*] Is Rosmer upstairs in his room?

Rebecca: No, he is out walking. He has stayed out rather longer than usual; but he is sure to be in directly. [*Motioning him to sit on the sofa.*] Won't you sit down till he comes?

Kroll: [*Laying down his hat.*] Many thanks. [*Sits down and looks about him.*] Why, how you have brightened up the old room! Flowers everywhere!

Rebecca: Mr. Rosmer is so fond of having fresh, growing flowers about him.

Kroll: And you are too, are you not?

Rebecca: Yes; they have a delightfully soothing effect on me. We had to do without them, though, till lately.

Kroll: [*Nods sadly.*] Yes, their scent was too much for poor Beata.

Rebecca: Their colours, too. They quite bewildered her—

Kroll: I remember, I remember. [*In a lighter tone.*] Well, how are things going out here?

Rebecca: Oh, everything is going its quiet, jog-trot way. One day is just like another.—And with you? Your wife—?

Kroll: Ah, my dear Miss West, don't let us talk about my affairs. There is always something or other amiss in a family; especially in times like these.

Rebecca: [*After a pause, sitting down in an easy-chair beside the sofa.*] How is it you haven't once been near us during the whole of the holidays?

Kroll: Oh, it doesn't do to make oneself a nuisance—

Rebecca: If you knew how we have missed you—

Kroll: And then I have been away—

Rebecca: Yes, for the last week or two. We have heard of you at political meetings.

Kroll: [*Nods.*] Yes, what do you say to that? Did you think I would turn political agitator in my old age, eh?

Rebecca: [*Smiling.*] Well, you have always been a bit of an agitator, Rector Kroll.

Kroll: Why, yes, just for my private amusement. But henceforth it is to be no laughing matter, I can tell you.—Do you ever see those radical newspapers?

Rebecca: Well yes, my dear Rector, I can't deny that—

Kroll: My dear Miss West, I have nothing to say against it—nothing in your case.

Rebecca: No, surely not. One likes to

what's going on—to keep up with time—

Kroll. And of course I should not nk of expecting you, as a woman, to ke actively with either party in the vil contest—I *might* almost say the ivil war—that is raging among us.— But you have seen then, I suppose, how these gentlemen of "the people" have been pleased to treat *me*? What infamous abuse they have had the audacity to heap on me?

Rebecca Yes, but it seems to me you gave as good as you got.

Kroll. So I did, though I say it that shouldn't. For now I have tasted blood, and they shall soon find to their cost that I am not the man to turn the other cheek—[*Breaks off*.] But come, come —don't let us get upon that subject this evening—it's too painful and irritating.

Rebecca Oh no, don't *let* us talk of it

Kroll. Tell me now—how do you get on at Rosmersholm, now that you are alone? Since our poor Beata—

Rebecca Thank you, I get on very well Of course one feels a great blank in many ways—a great sorrow and longing But otherwise—

Kroll: And do you think of remaining here?—permanently, I mean

Rebecca My dear Rector, I really haven't thought about it, one way or the other I have got so used to the place now, that I feel almost as if I belonged to it.

Kroll: Why, of course *you* belong to it

Rebecca And so long as Mr Rosmer finds that I am of any use or comfort to him—why, so long, I suppose, I shall stay here

Kroll: [*Looks at her with emotion*] Do you know,—it is really fine for a woman to sacrifice her whole youth to others as you have done.

Rebecca Oh, what else should I have had to live for?

Kroll: First, there was your untiring devotion to your paralytic and exacting father—

Dr. West was such a charge when we were up in Finmark. It was those terrible boat-voyages up there that broke him down. But after we came here—well yes, the two years before he found rest were certainly hard enough.

Kroll: And the years that followed—were they not even harder for you?

Rebecca: Oh how can you say such a thing? When I was so fond of Beata—and when she, poor dear, stood so sadly in need of care and forbearance.

Kroll: How good it is of you to think of her with so much kindness!

Rebecca [*Moves a little nearer*.] My dear Rector, you say that with such a ring of sincerity that I cannot think there is any ill-feeling lurking in the background.

Kroll Ill-feeling? Why, what do you mean?

Rebecca Well, it would be only natural if you felt it painful to see a stranger managing the household here at Rosmersholm

Kroll Why, how on earth—!

Rebecca But you have no such feeling? [*Takes his hand*.] Thanks, my dear Rector, thank you again and again.

Kroll. How on earth did you get such an idea into your head?

Rebecca I began to be a little afraid when your visits became so rare

Kroll Then you have been on totally wrong scent, Miss West Besid —after all, there has been no essent change Even while poor Beata was al —in her last unhappy days—it was y and you alone, that managed everyth

Rebecca That was only a so regency in Beata's name

Kroll Be that as it may— D know, Miss West—for my part, I have no objection whatever if But I suppose I mustn't say thing

Rebecca What must you not

Kroll If matters were to sha you took the empty place—

Rebecca I have the only pl Rector

mustn't suppose that

Kroll: In fact, yes; but not in—

Rebecca: [*Interrupting gravely.*] For shame, Rector Kroll. How can you joke about such things?

Kroll: Oh well, our good Johannes Rosmer very likely thinks he has had more than enough of married life already. But nevertheless—

Rebecca: You are really too absurd, Rector.

Kroll: Nevertheless—. Tell me, Miss West—if you will forgive the question—what is your age?

Rebecca: I'm sorry to say I am over nine-and-twenty, Rector; I am in my thirtieth year.

Kroll: Indeed. And Rosmer—how old is he? Let me see: he is five years younger than I am, so that makes him well over forty-three. I think it would be most suitable.

Rebecca: [*Rises.*] Of course, of course; most suitable.—Will you stay to supper this evening?

Kroll: Yes, many thanks; I thought of staying. There is a matter I want to discuss with our good friend.—And I suppose, Miss West, in case you should take fancies into your head again, I had better come out pretty often for the future—as I used to in the old days.

Rebecca: Oh yes, do—do. [*Shakes both his hands.*] Many thanks—how kind and good you are!

Kroll: [*Gruffly.*] Am I? Well, that's not what they tell me at home. [*Johannes Rosmer enters by the door on the right.*]

Rebecca: Mr. Rosmer, do you see who is here?

Johannes Rosmer: Madam Helseth told me. [*Rector Kroll has risen.*]

Rosmer: [*Gently and softly, pressing his hands.*] Welcome back to this house, my dear Kroll. [*Lays his hands on Kroll's shoulders and looks into his eyes.*] My dear old friend! I knew that sooner or later things would come all right between us.

Kroll: Why, my dear fellow—do you mean to say you too have been so foolish as to fancy there was anything wrong?

Rebecca: [*To Rosmer.*] Yes, only think,—it was nothing but fancy after all!

Rosmer: Is that really the case, Kroll? Then why did you desert us so entirely?

Kroll: [*Gravely, in a low voice.*] Because my presence would always have been reminding you of the years of your happiness, and of—the life that ended in the mill-race.

Rosmer: Well, it was a kind thought—you were always considerate. But it was quite unnecessary to remain away on that account.—Come, sit here on the sofa. [*They sit down.*] No, I assure you, the thought of Beata has no pain for me. We speak of her every day. We feel almost as if she were still one of the household.

Kroll: Do you really?

Rebecca: [*Lighting the lamp.*] Yes, indeed we do.

Rosmer: It is quite natural. We were both so deeply attached to her. And both Rebec—both Miss West and I know that we did all that was possible for her in her affliction. We have nothing to reproach ourselves with.—So I feel nothing but a tranquil tenderness now at the thought of Beata.

Kroll: You dear, good people! Henceforward, I declare I shall come out and see you every day.

Rebecca: [*Seats herself in an arm chair.*] Mind, we shall expect you to keep your word.

Rosmer: [*With some hesitation.*] My dear Kroll—I wish very much that our intercourse had never been interrupted. Ever since we have known each other, you have seemed predestined to be my adviser—ever since I went to the University.

Kroll: Yes, and I have always been proud of the office. But is there anything particular just now—?

Rosmer: There are many things that I would give a great deal to talk over with you, quite frankly—straight from the heart.

Rebecca: Ah yes, Mr. Rosmer—that

be such a comfort—between old ds—

Kroll: Oh I can tell you I have still e to talk to you about. I suppose you w I have turned a militant poli- an?

Rosmer: Yes, so you have. How did at come about?

Kroll: I was forced into it in spite of myself. It is impossible to stand idly looking on any longer. Now that the Radicals have unhappily come into power, it is high-time something should be done,—so I have got our little group of friends in the town to close up their ranks. I tell you it is high time!

Rebecca: [*With a faint smile.*] Don't you think it may even be a little late?

Kroll: Unquestionably it would have been better if we had checked the stream at an earlier point in its course But who could foresee what was going to happen? Certainly not I. [*Rises and walks up and down.*] But now I have had my eyes opened once for all, for now the spirit of revolt has crept into the school itself

Rosmer: Into the school? Surely not into your school?

Kroll: I tell you it has—into my own school. What do you think? It has come to my knowledge that the sixth-form boys—a number of them at any rate—have been keeping up a secret society for over six months; and they take in Mortensgård's paper!

Rebecca: The "Beacon"?

Kroll: Yes; nice mental sustenance for future government officials, is it not? But the worst of it is that it's all the cleverest boys in the form that have banded together in this conspiracy against me Only the dunces at the bottom of the class have kept out of it.

Rebecca: Do you take this so very much to heart, Rector?

Kroll: Do I take it to heart! To be so thwarted and opposed in the work of my whole life! [*Lower.*] But I could almost say I don't care about the school—for there is worse behind [*Looks round.*] ce no one can hear us?

Rebecca: Oh no, of course not.

Kroll: Well, then, I must tell you that dissension and revolt have crept into my own house—into my own quiet home. They have destroyed the peace of my family life.

Rosmer: [*Rises.*] What! Into your own house—?

Rebecca: [*Goes over to the Rector.*] My dear Rector, what has happened?

Kroll: Would you believe that my own children— In short, it is Laurits that is the ringleader of the school conspiracy; and Hilda has embroidered a red portfolio to keep the "Beacon" in.

Rosmer: I should certainly never have dreamt that, in your own house—

Kroll: No, who would have dreamt of such a thing? In my house, the very home of obedience and order—where one will, and one only, has always prevailed—

Rebecca: How does your wife take all this?

Kroll: Why, that is the most incredible part of it My wife, who all her life long has shared my opinions and concurred in my views, both in great things and small—she is actually inclined to side with the children on many points. And she blames me for what has happened She says I tyrannise over the children. As if it weren't necessary to —. Well, you see how my house is divided against itself But of course I say as little about it as possible Such things are best kept quiet [*Wanders up the room.*] Ah, well, well, well [*Stands at the window with his hands behind his back, and looks out*]

Rebecca: [*Comes up close to Rosmer and says rapidly and in a low voice, s that the Rector does not hear her*] Do now!

Rosmer [*Also in a low voice*] Not t evening.

Rebecca. [*As before*] Yes, just evening [*Goes to the table and busies herself with the lamp*]

Kroll. [*Comes forward*] Well, my Rosmer, now you know how the

of the age has overshadowed both my domestic and my official life. And am I to refrain from combating this pernicious, subversive, anarchic spirit, with any weapons I can lay my hands on? Fight it I will, trust me for that; both with tongue and pen.

Rosmer: Have you any hope of stemming the tide in that way?

Kroll: At any rate I shall have done my duty as a citizen in defence of the State. And I hold it the duty of every right-minded man with an atom of patriotism to do likewise. In fact—that was my principal reason for coming out here this evening.

Rosmer: Why, my dear Kroll, what do you mean—? What can I—?

Kroll: You can stand by your old friends. Do as we do. Lend a hand, with all your might.

Rebecca: But, Rector Kroll, you know Mr. Rosmer's distaste for public life.

Kroll: He must get over his distaste. You don't keep abreast of things, Rosmer. You bury yourself alive here, with your historical collections. Far be it from me to speak disrespectfully of family trees and so forth; but, unfortunately, this is no time for hobbies of that sort. You cannot imagine the state things are in, all over the country. There is hardly a single accepted idea that hasn't been turned topsy-turvy. It will be a gigantic task to get all the errors rooted out again.

Rosmer: I have no doubt of it. But I am the last man to undertake such a task.

Rebecca: And besides, I think Mr. Rosmer has come to take a wider view of life than he used to.

Kroll: [*With surprise.*] Wider?

Rebecca: Yes; or freer, if you like—less one-sided.

Kroll: What is the meaning of this? Rosmer—surely you are not so weak as to be influenced by the accident that the leaders of the mob have won a temporary advantage?

Rosmer: My dear Kroll, you know how little I understand of politics. But I confess it seems to me that within the last few years people are beginning to show greater independence of thought.

Kroll: Indeed! And you take it for granted that that must be an improvement! But in any case you are quite mistaken, my friend. Just inquire a little into the opinions that are current among the Radicals, both out here and in the town. They are neither more nor less than the wisdom that's retailed in the "Beacon."

Rebecca: Yes; Mortensgård has great influence over many people hereabouts.

Kroll: Yes, just think of it! A man of his foul antecedents—a creature that was turned out of his place as a schoolmaster on account of his immoral life! A fellow like that sets himself up as a leader of the people! And succeeds too! Actually succeeds! I hear he is going to enlarge his paper. I know on good authority that he is on the lookout for a capable assistant.

Rebecca: I wonder that you and your friends don't set up an opposition to him.

Kroll: That is the very thing we are going to do. We have to-day bought the "County News"; there was no difficulty about the money question. But — [*Turns to Rosmer.*] Now I come to my real errand. The difficulty lies in the conduct of the paper—the editing— Tell me, Rosmer,—don't you feel it your duty to undertake it, for the sake of the good cause?

Rosmer: [*Almost in consternation.*] I?

Rebecca: Oh, how can you think of such a thing?

Kroll: I can quite understand your horror of public meetings, and your reluctance to expose yourself to their tender mercies. But an editor's work is less conspicuous, or rather—

Rosmer: No, no, my dear friend, you must not ask me to do this.

Kroll: I should be quite willing to try my own hand at that style of work too; but I couldn't possibly manage it. I

such a multitude of irons in the ...ready. But for you, with no pro... ...n to tie you down— Of course ...est of us would give you as much as we could.

Rosmer: I cannot, Kroll. I am not ...ed for it.

Kroll: Not fitted? You said the same ...ing when your father preferred you to ...e living here—

Rosmer: And I was right. That was ...hy I resigned it.

Kroll: Oh, if only you are as good an editor as you were a clergyman, we shall not complain.

Rosmer: My dear Kroll—I tell you once for all—I cannot do it.

Kroll: Well, at any rate, you will lend us your name.

Rosmer: My name?

Kroll: Yes, the mere name, Johannes Rosmer, will be a great thing for the paper. We others are looked upon as confirmed partisans—indeed I hear I am denounced as a desperate fanatic—so that if we work the paper in our own names, we can't reckon upon its making much way among the misguided masses. You, on the contrary, have always kept out of the fight. Everybody knows and values your humanity and uprightness—your delicacy of mind—your unimpeachable honour. And then the prestige of your former position as a clergyman still clings to you; and, to crown all, you have your grand old family name!

Rosmer: Oh, my name—

Kroll [*Points to the portraits*.] Rosmers of Rosmersholm—clergymen and soldiers; government officials of high place and trust; gentlemen to the finger-tips, every man of them—a family that for nearly two centuries has held its place as the first in the district. [*Lays his hand on Rosmer's shoulder*.] Rosmer—you owe it to yourself and to the traditions of your race to take your share in guarding all that has hitherto been held sacred in our society [*Turns round*.] What do you say, Miss West?

Rebecca: [*Laughing softly, as if to herself*.] My dear Rector—I can't tell you how ludicrous all this seems to me.

Kroll: What do you say? Ludicrous?

Rebecca: Yes, ludicrous. For you must let me tell you frankly—

Rosmer: [*Quickly*.] No, no—be quiet! Not just now!

Kroll: [*Looks from one to the other*.] My dear friends, what on earth—![*Interrupting himself*.] H'm. [*Madam Helseth appears in the doorway on the right*.]

Madam Helseth: There's a man out in the kitchen passage that says he wants to see the Pastor.

Rosmer: [*Relieved*.] Ah, very well. Ask him to come in.

Madam Helseth: Into the sitting-room?

Rosmer: Yes, of course.

Madam Helseth: But he looks scarcely the sort of man to bring into the sitting-room.

Rebecca. Why, what does he look like, Madam Helseth?

Madam Helseth. Well, he's not much to look at, Miss, and that's a fact.

Rosmer Did he not give his name?

Madam Helseth. Yes—I think he said his name was Hekman or something of the sort.

Rosmer: I know nobody of that name.

Madam Helseth: And then he said he was called Uldric, too.

Rosmer: [*In surprise*.] Ulric Hetman! Was that it?

Madam Helseth: Yes, so it was—Hetman

Kroll I've surely heard that name before—

Rebecca: Wasn't that the name he used to write under—that strange being—

Rosmer: [*To Kroll*.] It is Ulric Brendel's pseudonym.

Kroll. That black sheep Ulric Brendel's—of course it is.

Rebecca. Then he is still alive.

Rosmer I heard he had joined a company of strolling players

Kroll: When last *I* heard of him, he was in the House of Correction.

Rosmer: Ask him to come in, Madam Helseth.

Madam Helseth: Oh, very well. [*She goes out.*]

Kroll: Are you really going to let a man like that into your house?

Rosmer: You know he was once my tutor.

Kroll: Yes, I know he went and crammed your head full of revolutionary ideas, until your father showed him the door—with his horsewhip.

Rosmer: [*With a touch of bitterness.*] Father was a martinet at home as well as in his regiment.

Kroll: Thank him in his grave for that, my dear Rosmer.—Well! [*Madam Helseth opens the door on the right for Ulric Brendel, and then withdraws, shutting the door behind him. He is a handsome man, with grey hair and beard; somewhat gaunt, but active and well set up. He is dressed like a common tramp; threadbare frock-coat; worn-out shoes; no shirt visible. He wears an old pair of black gloves, and carries a soft, greasy felt hat under his arm, and a walking-stick in his hand.*]

Ulric Brendel: [*Hesitates at first, then goes quickly up to the Rector, and holds out his hand.*] Good evening, Johannes!

Kroll: Excuse me—

Brendel: Did you expect to see me again? And within these hated walls, too?

Kroll: Excuse me— [*Pointing.*] There——

Brendel: [*Turns.*] Right. There he is. Johannes—my boy—my best-beloved—!

Rosmer: [*Takes his hand.*] My old teacher.

Brendel: Notwithstanding certain painful memories, I could not pass by Rosmersholm without paying you a flying visit.

Rosmer: You are heartily welcome here now. Be sure of that.

Brendel: Ah, this charming lady—? [*Bows.*] Mrs. Rosmer, of course.

Rosmer: Miss West.

Brendel: A near relation, no doubt. And yonder unknown—? A brother of the cloth, I see.

Rosmer: Rector Kroll.

Brendel: Kroll? Kroll? Wait a bit?—Weren't you a student of philology in your young days?

Kroll: Of course I was.

Brendel: Why *Donnerwetter*, then I knew you!

Kroll: Pardon me—

Brendel: Weren't you—

Kroll: Pardon me—

Brendel: —one of those myrmidons of morality that got me turned out of the Debating Club?

Kroll: Very likely. But I disclaim any closer acquaintanceship.

Brendel: Well, well! *Nach Belieben, Herr Doctor.* It's all one to me. Ulric Brendel remains the man he is for all that.

Rebecca: You are on your way into town, Mr. Brendel?

Brendel: You have hit it, gracious lady. At certain intervals, I am constrained to strike a blow for existence. It goes against the grain; but—*enfin*—imperious necessity—

Rosmer: Oh, but, my dear Mr. Brendel, you must allow me to help you. In one way or another, I am sure—

Brendel: Ha, such a proposal to me! Would you desecrate the bond that unites us? Never, Johannes, never!

Rosmer: But what do you think of doing in town? Believe me, you won't find it easy to—

Brendel: Leave that to me, my boy. The die is cast. Simple as I stand here before you, I am engaged in a comprehensive campaign—more comprehensive than all my previous excursions put together. [*To Rector Kroll.*] Dare I ask the Herr Professor—*unter uns*—have you a tolerably decent, reputable, and commodious Public Hall in your estimable city?

Kroll: The hall of the Workmen's Society is the largest.

Brendel: And has the Herr Professor

any official influence in this doubtless most beneficent Society?

Kroll: I have nothing to do with it.

Rebecca: [*To Brendel.*] You should apply to Peter Mortensgård.

Brendel: Pardon, madame—what sort of an idiot is he?

Rosmer: What makes you take him for an idiot?

Brendel: Can't I tell at once by the name that it belongs to a plebeian?

Kroll: I did not expect that answer.

Brendel: But I will conquer my reluctance. There is no alternative. When a man stands—as I do—at a turning-point in his career—. It is settled. I will approach this individual—will open personal negotiations—

Rosmer: Are you really and seriously standing at a turning-point?

Brendel: Surely my own boy knows that, stand he where he may, Ulric Brendel always stands really and seriously.—Yes, Johannes, I am going to put on a new man—to throw off the modest reserve I have hitherto maintained——

Rosmer: How—?

Brendel: I am about to take hold of life with a strong hand; to step forth; to assert myself. We live in a tempestuous, an equinoctial age.—I am about to lay my mite on the altar of Emancipation.

Kroll. You, too?

Brendel: [*To them all.*] Is the local public at all familiar with my occasional writings?

Kroll. No, I must candidly confess that—

Rebecca: I have read several of them My adopted father had them in his library.

Brendel· Fair lady, then you have wasted your time. For, let me tell you, they are so much rubbish.

Rebecca· Indeed!

Brendel: What you have read, yes. My really important works no man or woman knows. No one—except myself.

Rebecca· How does that happen?

Brendel: Because they are not written

Rosmer: But, my dear Mr. Brendel——

Brendel: You know, my Johannes, that I am a bit of a Sybarite—a *Feinschmecker.* I have been so all my days. I like to take my pleasures in solitude; for then I enjoy them doubly—tenfold. So, you see, when golden dreams descended and enwrapped me—when new, dizzy, far-reaching thoughts were born in me, and wafted me aloft on their sustaining pinions—I bodied them forth in poems, visions, pictures—in the rough, as it were, you understand.

Rosmer: Yes, yes.

Brendel: Oh, what pleasures, what intoxications I have enjoyed in my time! The mysterious bliss of creation—in the rough, as I said—applause, gratitude, renown, the wreath of bays—all these I have garnered with full hands quivering with joy. I have sated myself, in my secret thoughts, with a rapture—oh! so intense, so inebriating—!

Kroll. H'm.

Rosmer: But you have written nothing down?

Brendel: Not a word. The soulless toil of the scrivener has always aroused a sickening aversion in me. And besides, why should I profane my own ideals, when I could enjoy them in their purity by myself? But now they shall be offered up. I assure you I feel like a mother who delivers her tender daughters into their bridegrooms' arms. But I will offer them up, none the less. I will sacrifice them on the altar of Emancipation. A series of carefully elaborated lectures—over the whole country—!

Rebecca: [*With animation.*] This is noble of you, Mr. Brendel! You are yielding up the dearest thing you possess.

Rosmer· The only thing.

Rebecca [*Looking significantly at Rosmer*.] How many are there who do as much—who dare do as much?

Rosmer: [*Returning the look.*] Who knows?

Brendel My audience is touched. That does my heart good—and steels

my will. So now I will proceed to action. Stay—one thing more. [*To the Rector.*] Can you tell me, Herr Preceptor,—is there such a thing as a Temperance Society in the town? A Total Abstinence Society? I need scarcely ask.

Kroll: Yes, there is. I am the president, at your service.

Brendel: I saw it in your face! Well, it is by no means impossible that I may come to you and enroll myself as a member for a week.

Kroll: Excuse me—we don't receive members by the week.

Brendel: A la bonne heure, Herr Pedagogue. Ulric Brendel has never forced himself into that sort of Society. [*Turns.*] But I must not prolong my stay in this house, so rich in memories. I must get on to the town and select a suitable lodging. I presume there is a decent hotel in the place.

Rebecca: Mayn't I offer you anything before you go?

Brendel: Of what sort, gracious lady?

Rebecca: A cup of tea, or—

Brendel: I thank my bountiful hostess—but I am always loath to trespass on private hospitality. [*Waves his hand.*] Farewell, gentlefolks all! [*Goes towards the door, but turns again.*] Oh, by the way—Johannes—Pastor Rosmer—for the sake of our ancient friendship, will you do your former teacher a service?

Rosmer: Yes, with all my heart.

Brendel: Good. Then lend me—for a day or two—a starched shirt—with cuffs.

Rosmer: Nothing else?

Brendel: For you see I am travelling on foot—at present. My trunk is being sent after me.

Rosmer: Quite so. But is there nothing else?

Brendel: Well, do you know—perhaps you could spare me an oldish, well-worn summer overcoat.

Rosmer: Yes, yes; certainly I can.

Brendel: And if a respectable pair of boots happened to go along with the coat—

Rosmer: That we can manage, too. As soon as you let us know your address, we will send the things in.

Brendel: Not on any account. Pray do not let me give you any trouble! I will take the bagatelles with me.

Rosmer: As you please. Come upstairs with me then.

Rebecca: Let me go. Madam Helseth and I will see to it.

Brendel: I cannot think of suffering this distinguished lady to—

Rebecca: Oh, nonsense! Come along, Mr. Brendel. [*She goes out to the right.*]

Rosmer: [*Detaining him.*] Tell me—is there nothing else I can do for you?

Brendel: Upon my word, I know of nothing more. Well, yes, damn it all—now that I think of it—! Johannes, do you happen to have eight crowns in your pocket?

Rosmer: Let me see. [*Opens his purse.*] Here are two ten-crown notes.

Brendel: Well, well, never mind! I can take them. I can always get them changed in the town. Thanks in the meantime. Remember it was two tenners you lent me. Good-night my own dear boy. Good-night, respected Sir. [*Goes out to the right. Rosmer takes leave of him, and shuts the door behind him.*]

Kroll: Merciful Heaven—so that is the Ulric Brendel people once expected such great things of.

Rosmer: [*Quietly.*] At least he has had the courage to live his life his own way. I don't think that is such a small matter either.

Kroll: What? A life like his! I almost believe he has it in him to turn your head afresh.

Rosmer: Oh, no. My mind is quite clear now, upon all points.

Kroll: I wish I could believe it, my dear Rosmer. You are so terribly impressionable.

Rosmer: Let us sit down. I want to talk to you.

Kroll: Yes, let us. [*They seat themselves on the sofa.*]

Rosmer: [*After a slight pause.*] Don't

...k we lead a pleasant and com...e life here?

...l: Yes, your life is pleasant and ...rtable now—and peaceful. You ... found yourself a home, Rosmer. I have lost mine.

...osmer: My dear friend, don't say ...t. The wound will heal again in time.

Kroll: Never, never. The barb will ...ways rankle. Things can never be as ...hey were.

Rosmer: Listen to me, Kroll. We have been fast friends for many and many a year. Does it seem to you conceivable that our friendship should ever go to wreck?

Kroll: I know of nothing in the world that could estrange us. What puts that into your head?

Rosmer: You attach such paramount importance to uniformity of opinions and views.

Kroll: No doubt; but we two are in practical agreement—at any rate on the great essential questions.

Rosmer: [*In a low voice.*] No; not now.

Kroll: [*Tries to spring up.*] What is this?

Rosmer: [*Holding him.*] No, you must sit still—I entreat you, Kroll.

Kroll: What can this mean? I don't understand you. Speak plainly.

Rosmer: A new summer has blossomed in my soul. I see with eyes grown young again. And so now I stand—

Kroll: Where—where, Rosmer?

Rosmer: Where your children stand.

Kroll: You? You! Impossible! Where do you say you stand?

Rosmer: On the same side as Laurits and Hilda.

Kroll: [*Bows his head.*] An apostate! Johannes Rosmer an apostate!

Rosmer: I should have felt so happy—so intensely happy, in what you call my apostasy. But, nevertheless, I suffered deeply, for I knew it would be a bitter sorrow to you.

Kroll: Rosmer—Rosmer! I shall never ... over this! [*Looks gloomily at him.*] ... you, too, can find it in your heart to help on the work of corruption and ruin in this unhappy land.

Rosmer: It is the work of emancipation I wish to help on.

Kroll: Oh, yes, I know. That is what both the tempters and their victims call it. But do you think there is any emancipation to be expected from the spirit that is now poisoning our social life?

Rosmer: I am not in love with the spirit that is in the ascendant, nor with either of the contending parties. I will try to bring together men from both sides—as many as I *can*—and to unite them as closely as possible. I will devote my life and all my energies to this one thing—the creation of a true democracy in this country.

Kroll: So you don't think we have democracy enough already! For my part it seems to me we are all in a fair way to be dragged down into the mire, where hitherto only the mob have been able to thrive.

Rosmer: That is just why I want to awaken the democracy to its true task.

Kroll: What task?

Rosmer: That of making all the people of this country noble—

Kroll: All the people—?

Rosmer: As many as possible, at any rate.

Kroll: By what means?

Rosmer: By freeing their minds and purifying their wills.

Kroll: You are a dreamer, Rosmer. Will you purify them? Will you free them?

Rosmer: No, my dear friend—I wil... only try to arouse them to their tas... They themselves must accomplish it.

Kroll. And you think they can?

Rosmer: Yes.

Kroll. By their own strength?

Rosmer: Yes, precisely by their strength. There is no other.

Kroll: [*Rises.*] Is this becomin... guage for a priest?

Rosmer: I am no longer a pries...

Kroll: Well but—the faith ... fathers—?

seen, is diffident, hesitant to commit himself, but Brendel's spirit drives him to act. He too has acquired the spirit of no-compromise; perhaps Brendel's presence is to symbolize what happens, and must happen, to Rosmer. That, at any rate, is one possible approach to the problem.

But Brendel is used in several other ways: (1) He shows further the influence of past on present. (2) He helps characterize Kroll, and his effect on Rebecca sheds further light on her. (3) We learn more about Rosmer through the reference to his home life in the past. (4) Brendel's initial mistaking of Kroll for Rosmer has a strong suggestive value. (5) Brendel's reference to the charm and beauty of Rebecca prepare for what he is to say [illegible] of his humor provide [illegible] ırdness of Kroll and [illegible] 't of things, which is appropriate to his character, provides a good example of the foreshortening characteristic of drama.

11. Note the structure of the act: each scene helps lead up to the climactic dialogue between Kroll and Rosmer. There is, however, another complication in the structure of the act. Kroll's final lines, "You shall never cross my threshold again," would, by most stage conventions, close the act admirably. But Ibsen adds two short scenes, milder in tone. What is accomplished in the brief scene between Rosmer and Rebecca? By that between Rebecca and Madam Helseth? Does it foreshadow future events? Is the symbolic meaning of the white horse becoming clear? Is there any dramatic usefulness in the contrast between Rebecca and Madam Helseth?

Could it be argued that the final scenes show that Ibsen wishes not only to focus our attention on the main clash but to go right ahead to consider the meaning and probable consequences of the clash?

12. That meaning, we can see taking shape in the nature of the basic conflict. This conflict, it is already suggested, is one between tradition and "emancipation," orthodoxy and rationalism, "blood" and intellect. What other conflicting elements do you find suggested? What are the passages which especially call attention to the conflict? Very early in the play Rebecca and Madam Helseth talk about the relationship between the living and the dead at Rosmersholm. Does this interchange give us an early clue to the conflict? What is the significance, with regard to the whole complex of meanings involved in the conflict, of: (1) Kroll's ironic change of mind about seeing Rosmer and Rebecca again? (2) Kroll's ironic change of mind about the relationship between Rosmer, Rebecca, and Beata? (3) Kroll's telling Rosmer that he is "impressionable" and that the conservatives will win him back? Consider what light is shed on the matter by Rebecca's manner with Rosmer.

ACT SECOND

[JOHANNES ROSMER's study. Entrance door on the left. At the back, a doorway with a curtain drawn aside, leading into Rosmer's bedroom. On the right a window, and in front of it a writing-table covered with books and papers. Book-shelves and cases round the room. The furniture is simple. On the left, an old-fashioned sofa, with a table in front of it.]

[*Johannes Rosmer, in an indoor jacket, is sitting in a high-backed chair at the writing-table. He is cutting and turning over the leaves of a pamphlet, and reading a little here and there. There is a knock at the door on the left*].

Rosmer: [*Without moving.*] Come in.

Rebecca West: [*Enters, dressed in a morning gown.*] Good morning.

Rosmer: [*Turning the leaves of the pamphlet.*] Good morning, dear. Do you want anything?

Rebecca: I only wanted to hear if you had slept well.

Rosmer: Oh, I have had a beautiful, peaceful night. [*Turns.*] And you?

Rebecca: Oh, yes, thanks—towards morning—

Rosmer: I don't know when I have felt so light-hearted as I do now. I am so glad I managed to speak out at last.

Rebecca: Yes, it is a pity you remained silent so long, Rosmer.

Rosmer: I don't understand myself how I could be such a coward.

Rebecca: It wasn't precisely cowardice—

Rosmer: Oh, yes, dear—when I think the thing out, I can see there was a touch of cowardice at the bottom of it.

Rebecca: All the braver, then, to make the plunge at last. [*Sits on a chair at the writing-table, close to him.*] But now I want to tell you of something I have done—and you mustn't be vexed with me about it.

Rosmer: Vexed? How can you think—?

Rebecca: Well, it was perhaps rather indiscreet of me but—

Rosmer: Let me hear what it was.

Rebecca: Yesterday evening, when Ulric Brendel was leaving—I gave him a note to Peter Mortensgård.

Rosmer: [*A little doubtful.*] Why, my dear Rebecca— Well, what did you say?

Rebecca: I said that he would be doing you a service if he would look after that unfortunate creature a little, and help him in any way he could.

Rosmer: Dear, you shouldn't have done that. You have only done Brendel harm. And Mortensgård is not a man I care to have anything to do with. You know of that old episode between us.

Rebecca: But don't you think it would be as well to make it up with him again?

Rosmer: I? With Mortensgård? In what way do you mean?

Rebecca: Well, you know you can't feel absolutely secure now—after this breach with your old friends.

Rosmer: [*Looks at her and shakes his head.*] Can you really believe that Kroll or any of the others would try to take revenge on me? That they would be capable of—?

Rebecca: In the first heat of anger, dear—. No one can be sure. I think—after the way the Rector took it—

Rosmer: Oh, you ought surely to know him better than that. Kroll is a gentleman, to the backbone. I am going into town this afternoon to talk to him. I will talk to them all. Oh, you shall see how easily it will all go—[*Madam Helseth appears at the door on the left.*]

Rebecca: [*Rises.*] What is it, Madam Helseth?

Madam Helseth: Rector Kroll is downstairs in the hall.

Rosmer: [*Rises hastily.*] Kroll!

Rebecca: The Rector! Is it possible—

Madam Helseth: He wants to know if he may come upstairs, Mr. Rosmer.

Rosmer: [*To Rebecca.*] What did I tell

you!—Of course he may. [*Goes to the door and calls down the stairs.*] Come up, dear friend! I am delighted to see you. [*Rosmer stands holding the door open. Madam Helseth goes out. Rebecca draws the curtain before the doorway at the back, and then begins arranging things in the room.*] [*Rector Kroll enters, with his hat in his hand.*]

Rosmer: [*With quiet emotion.*] I knew it couldn't be the last time—

Kroll: I see things to-day in quite a [illegible]

[illegible]

reflect.

Kroll: You misunderstand me com- [illegible]

[illegible]

—?

Rebecca: No no, Mr. Rosmer. I will go.

Kroll: [*Looks at her from head to foot.*] And I must ask Miss West to excuse my coming at such an untimely hour—taking her unawares before she has had had time to—

Rebecca: [*Surprised.*] What do you mean? Do you see any harm in my wearing a morning gown about the house?

Kroll: Heaven forbid! I know nothing of what may now be customary at Rosmersholm.

Rosmer: Why, Kroll—you are not yourself to-day!

Rebecca: Allow me to wish you good morning, Rector Kroll. [*She goes out to the left.*]

Kroll: By your leave—[*Sits on sofa.*]

Rosmer: Yes, Kroll, sit down, and let us talk things out amicably. [*He seats himself in a chair directly opposite to the Rector.*]

Kroll: I haven't closed an eye since yesterday. I have been lying thinking and thinking all night.

Rosmer: And what do you say to things to-day?

Kroll: It will be a long story, Rosmer. Let me begin with a sort of [illegible]. I can give you news of Ulric Brendel.

Rosmer: Has he called on you?

Kroll: No. He took up his quarters in a low public-house—in the lowest company of course—and drank and stood treat as long as he had any money. Then he began abusing the whole company as a set of disreputable blackguards—and so far he was quite right—whereupon they thrashed him and pitched him out into the gutter.

Rosmer: So he is incorrigible after all.

Kroll: He had pawned the coat, too; but I am told that has been redeemed for him. Can you guess by whom?

Rosmer: Perhaps by you?

Kroll: No; by the distinguished Mr. Mortensgård.

Rosmer: Ah, indeed.

Kroll: I understand that Mr. Brendel's first visit was to the "idiot" and "plebeian."

Rosmer: Well, it was lucky for him—

Kroll: To be sure it was. [*Leans over the table towards Rosmer.*] But that brings me to a matter it is my duty to warn you about, for our old—for our former friendship's sake.

Rosmer: My dear Kroll, what can that be?

Kroll: It is this: there are things going on behind your back in this house.

Rosmer: How can you think so? Is it Reb—is it Miss West you are aiming at?

Kroll: Precisely. I can quite understand it on her part. She has so long been accustomed to have everything her own way here. But nevertheless—

Rosmer: My dear Kroll, you are utterly mistaken. She and I—we have no concealments from each other on any subject whatever.

Kroll: Has she told you, then, that she has entered into correspondence with the editor of the "Beacon"?

Rosmer: Oh, you are thinking of the few lines she sent by Ulric Brendel?

Kroll: Then you have found it out. And do you approve of her entering [illegible]

into relations with a scurrilous scribbler, who never lets a week pass without holding me up to ridicule, both as a schoolmaster and as a public man?

Rosmer: My dear Kroll, I don't suppose that side of the matter ever entered her head. And besides, of course she has full liberty of action, just as I have.

Kroll: Indeed? Ah, no doubt that follows from your new line of thought. For Miss West presumably shares your present standpoint?

Rosmer: Yes, she does. We two have worked our way forward in faithful comradeship.

Kroll: [*Looks at him and slowly shakes his head.*] Oh, you blind, deluded being!

Rosmer: I? Why do you say that?

Kroll: Because I dare not—I will not think the worst. No no, let me say my say out.—You really do value my friendship, Rosmer? And my respect too? Do you not?

Rosmer: I surely need not answer that question.

Kroll: Well, but there are other questions that do require an answer—a full explanation on your part.—Will you submit to a sort of investigation—?

Rosmer: Investigation?

Kroll: Yes; will you let me question you about certain things it may pain you to be reminded of? You see—this apostasy of yours—well, this emancipation, as you call it—is bound up with many other things that for your own sake you must explain to me.

Rosmer: My dear Kroll, ask what questions you please. I have nothing to conceal.

Kroll: Then tell me—what do you think was the real, the ultimate reason why Beata put an end to her life?

Rosmer: Can you have any doubt on the subject? Or, rather, can you ask for reasons for what an unhappy, irresponsible invalid may do?

Kroll: Are you certain that Beata was completely irresponsible for her actions? The doctors, at any rate, were by no means convinced of it.

Rosmer: If the doctors had ever seen her as I have so often seen her, for days and nights together, they would have had no doubts.

Kroll: I had no doubts either—then.

Rosmer: Oh, no, unhappily, there wasn't the smallest room for doubt. I have told you of her wild frenzies of passion—which she expected me to return. Oh, how they appalled me! And then her causeless, consuming self-reproaches during the last few years.

Kroll: Yes, when she had learnt that she must remain childless all her life.

Rosmer: Yes, just think of that! Such terrible, haunting agony of mind about a thing utterly beyond her control—! How could you call her responsible for her actions?

Kroll: H'm—. Can you remember whether you had any books in the house at that time treating of the rationale of marriage—according to the "advanced" ideas of the day?

Rosmer: I remember Miss West lending me a work of the kind. The Doctor left her his library, you know. But, my dear Kroll, you surely cannot suppose we were so reckless as to let my poor sick wife get hold of any such ideas? I can solemnly assure you that the fault was not ours. It was her own distempered brain that drove her into these wild aberrations.

Kroll: One thing at any rate I can tell you; and that is, that poor, overstrung, tortured Beata put an end to her life in order that you might live happily—live freely, and—after your own heart.

Rosmer: [*Starts half up from his chair.*] What do you mean by that?

Kroll: Listen to me quietly, Rosmer; for now I can speak of it. In the last year of her life she came to me twice to pour forth all her anguish and despair.

Rosmer: On this same subject?

Kroll: No. The first time she came, it was to declare that you were on the road to perversion—that you were going to break with the faith of your fathers.

Rosmer: [*Eagerly.*] What you say is

impossible, Kroll. Absolutely impossible! You must be mistaken.

Kroll: And why?

Rosmer: Because while Beata was alive I was still wrestling with myself in doubt. And that fight I fought out alone and in utter silence. I don't think even Rebecca—

Kroll: Rebecca?

Rosmer: Oh, well—Miss West. I call her Rebecca for convenience' sake.

Kroll: So I have remarked.

Rosmer: So it is inconceivable to me how Beata could have got hold of the idea. And why did she not speak to me about it? She never did—she never said a single word.

Kroll: Poor creature—she begged and implored me to talk to you.

Rosmer: And why did you not?

Kroll: At that time I never for a moment doubted that she was out of her mind. Such an accusation against a man like you!—And then she came again—about a month later. This time she seemed outwardly calmer, but as she was going she said: "They may soon expect the White Horse at Rosmersholm now."

Rosmer: Yes, yes. The White Horse—she often spoke of it.

Kroll: And when I tried to divert her mind from such melancholy fancies, she only answered: "I have not long to live, for Johannes must marry Rebecca at once."

Rosmer: [*Almost speechless.*] What do you say? I marry—?

Kroll: That was on a Thursday afternoon—. On the Saturday evening she threw herself from the bridge into the mill-race.

Rosmer: And you never warned us—!

Kroll: You know very well how often she used to say that she felt her end was near.

Rosmer: Yes, I know. But nevertheless— [illegible]

lat[illegible]

Rosmer: But afterwards, why did you not—? Why have you said nothing about all this?

Kroll: What good would it have done for me to come torturing and harassing you still further? I took all she said for mere wild, empty ravings—until yesterday evening.

Rosmer: Then you have now changed your opinion?

Kroll: Did not Beata see quite clearly when she declared you were about to desert the faith of your fathers?

Rosmer: [*Looks fixedly, straight before him.*] I cannot understand it. It is the most incomprehensible thing in the world.

Kroll: Incomprehensible or not—there it is. And now I ask you, Rosmer,—how much truth is there in her other accusation? The last one, I mean.

Rosmer: Accusation? Was that an accusation?

Kroll: Perhaps you did not notice the way she worded it. She had to go, she said—why?

Rosmer: In order that I might marry Rebecca—

Kroll: These were not precisely her words. Beata used a different expression. She said: "I have not long to live, for *Johannes must marry Rebecca at once.*"

Rosmer: [*Looks at him for a moment; then rises.*] Now I understand you, Kroll.

Kroll: And what then? What is your answer?

Rosmer: [*Still quiet and self-restrained.*] To such an unheard-of—? The only fitting answer would be to point to the door.

Kroll: [*Rises.*] Well and good.

Rosmer: [*Stands in front of him.*] Listen to me. For more than a year—ever since Beata left us—Rebecca West has lived alone here at Rosmersholm. During all that time you have known of Beata's accusation against us. But I have never for a moment noticed [illegible] approved of Rebecca's living [illegible]

Kroll: I did not know till yesterday

evening that it was an unbelieving man who was living with an—emancipated woman.

Rosmer: Ah—! Then you do not believe that purity of mind is to be found among the unbelieving and the emancipated? You do not believe that morality may be an instinctive law of their nature!

Kroll: I have no great faith in the morality that is not founded on the teachings of the Church.

Rosmer: And you mean this to apply to Rebecca and me? To the relation between us two—?

Kroll: Not even out of consideration for you two can I depart from my opinion that there is no unfathomable gulf between free thought and—h'm—

Rosmer: And what?

Kroll: —and free love,—since you will have it.

Rosmer: [*In a low voice.*] And you are not ashamed to say this to me! You, who have known me from my earliest youth!

Kroll: For that very reason. I know how easily you are influenced by the people you associate with. And this Rebecca of yours—well, Miss West then—we really know little or nothing about her. In short, Rosmer—I will not give you up. And you—you must try to save yourself in time.

Rosmer: Save myself? How—? [*Madam Helseth peeps in at the door on the left.*]

Rosmer: What do you want?

Madam Helseth: I wanted to ask Miss West to step downstairs.

Rosmer: Miss West is not up here.

Madam Helseth: Isn't she? [*Looks round the room.*] Well, that's strange. [*She goes.*]

Rosmer: You were saying—?

Kroll: Listen to me. I am not going to inquire too closely into the secret history of what went on here in Beata's lifetime—and may still be going on. I know that your marriage was a most unhappy one; and I suppose that must be taken as some sort of excuse—

Rosmer: Oh, how little you really know me—!

Kroll: Don't interrupt me. What I mean is this: if your present mode of life with Miss West is to continue, it is absolutely necessary that the change of views—the unhappy backsliding—brought about by her evil influence, should be hushed up. Let me speak! Let me speak! I say, if the worst comes to the worst, in Heaven's name think and believe whatever you like about everything under the sun. But you must keep your views to yourself. These things are purely personal matters, after all. There is no need to proclaim them from the housetops.

Rosmer: I feel it an absolute necessity to get out of a false and equivocal position.

Kroll: But you have a duty towards the traditions of your race, Rosmer! Remember that! Rosmersholm has, so to speak, radiated morality and order from time immemorial—yes, and respectful conformity to all that is accepted and sanctioned by the best people. The whole district has taken its stamp from Rosmersholm. It would lead to deplorable, irremediable confusion if it were known that you had broken with what I may call the hereditary idea of the house of Rosmer.

Rosmer: My dear Kroll, I cannot see the matter in that light. I look upon it as my imperative duty to spread a little light and gladness here, where the Rosmer family has from generation to generation been a centre of darkness and oppression.

Kroll: [*Looks at him severely.*] Yes, that would be a worthy life-work for the last of your race! No, Rosmer; let such things alone; you are the last man for such a task. You were born to be a quiet student.

Rosmer: Perhaps so. But for once in a way I mean to bear my part in the battle of life.

Kroll: And do you know what that battle of life will mean for you? It will

mean a life-and-death [illegible] with [illegible] your friends.

Rosmer: [*Quietly.*] They [illegible] such fanatics as you.

Kroll: You are a [illegible] Rosmer. An inexperienced [illegible]. You have no conception of the over-whelming storm that will burst [illegible] you. [*Madam Helseth* [illegible] *on the left.*]

Madam Helseth: Miss West wants to know—

Rosmer: What is it?

Madam Helseth: There's a man down-stairs wanting to have a word with the Pastor.

Rosmer: Is it the man who was here yesterday evening?

Madam Helseth: No, it's that Mortensgård.

Rosmer: Mortensgård?

Kroll: Aha! So it has come to this, has it!—Already!

Rosmer. What does he want with me? Why didn't you send him away?

Madam Helseth: Miss West said I was to ask if he might come upstairs.

Rosmer. Tell him I'm engaged—

Kroll: [*To Madam Helseth.*] Let him come up, Madam Helseth. [*Madam Helseth goes.*]

Kroll: [*Takes up his hat.*] I retire from the field—for the moment. But the main battle has yet to be fought.

Rosmer: On my honour, Kroll—I have nothing whatever to do with Mortensgård.

Kroll: I do not believe you. On no subject and [illegible]

[illegible]

Rosmer: Oh, Kroll—how low—how very low you have sunk!

Kroll: I? And you think you have the right to say that to me! Remember Beata!

Rosmer: Still harping upon that?

Kroll. No. You must solve the enigma of the mill race according to your own conscience—if you have any-

[illegible]

Kroll: [illegible] you have long known your [illegible]. To be sure there's a commandment about bearing false witness against your neighbour—

Mortensgård: [illegible] Kroll need not [illegible] the commandments.

Kroll: Not even [illegible] the seventh?

Rosmer: —Kroll!

Mortensgård: If I needed instruction, it would never be the Pastor's business.

Kroll: [*With a forced smile.*] The Pastor's? [illegible] unquestionably Pastor Rosmer is the man for that.—Good luck to your conference, gentlemen! [*Goes out and* [illegible].]

Rosmer: [*Keeps his eyes fixed on the closed door and says to himself.*] Well, well—so be it then. [*Turns.*] Will you be good enough to tell me, Mr. Mortensgård, what brings you out here to me?

Mortensgård: It was really Miss West I came to see. I wanted to thank her for the friendly note I received from her yesterday.

Rosmer: I know she wrote to you. Have [illegible]

[illegible] of views out here at Rosmersholm.

Rosmer: My views are altered in many respects. I might almost say in all.

Mortensgård: So Miss West told me, and that's why she thought I had better come up and talk things over with the Pastor.

Rosmer: What things, Mr. Mortensgård?

Mortensgård: May I announce in the

"Beacon" that there has been a change in your views—that you have joined the party of freedom and progress?

Rosmer: Certainly you may. In fact, I beg you to make the announcement.

Mortensgård: Then it shall appear in to-morrow's paper. It will cause a great sensation when it's known that Pastor Rosmer of Rosmersholm is prepared to take up arms for the cause of light, in that sense, too.

Rosmer: I don't quite understand you.

Mortensgård: I mean that the moral position of our party is greatly strengthened whenever we gain an adherent of serious, Christian principles.

Rosmer: [*With some surprise.*] Then you do not know—? Did not Miss West tell you that, too?

Mortensgård: What, Pastor Rosmer? Miss West was in a great hurry. She said I was to go upstairs and hear the rest from yourself.

Rosmer: Well, in that case I may tell you that I have emancipated myself entirely, and on every side. I have broken with all the dogmas of the Church. Henceforth they are nothing to me.

Mortensgård: [*Looks at him in amazement.*] Well—if the skies were to fall I couldn't be more—! Pastor Rosmer himself announces—.

Rosmer: Yes, I now stand where you have stood for many years. That, too, you may announce in the "Beacon" to-morrow.

Mortensgård: That too? No, my dear Pastor—excuse me— I don't think it would be wise to touch on that side of the matter.

Rosmer: Not touch on it?

Mortensgård: Not at present, I mean.

Rosmer: I don't understand—

Mortensgård: Well, you see, Pastor Rosmer—you probably don't know the ins and outs of things so well as I do. But, since you have come over to the party of freedom—and, as I hear from Miss West, you intend to take an active share in the movement—I presume you would like to be of as much service as possible, both to the cause in general and to this particular agitation.

Rosmer: Yes, that is my earnest wish.

Mortensgård: Good. But now I must tell you, Pastor Rosmer, that if you openly declare your defection from the Church, you tie your own hands at the very outset.

Rosmer: Do you think so?

Mortensgård: Yes; believe me, you won't be able to do much for the cause, in this part of the country at any rate. And besides—we have plenty of free-thinkers already, Pastor Rosmer—I might almost say too many. What the party requires, is a Christian element—something that every one must respect. That is what we are sadly in need of. And, therefore, I advise you to keep your own counsel about what doesn't concern the public. That's my view of the matter, at least.

Rosmer: I understand. Then if I openly confess my apostasy, you dare not have anything to do with me?

Mortensgård: [*Shaking his head.*] I scarcely like to risk it, Pastor Rosmer. I have made it a rule for some time past not to support any one or anything that is actively opposed to the Church.

Rosmer: Then you have yourself returned to the Church?

Mortensgård: That concerns no one but myself.

Rosmer: Ah, so that is it. Now I understand you.

Mortensgård: Pastor Rosmer—you ought to remember that I—I in particular—have not full liberty of action.

Rosmer: What hampers you?

Mortensgård: The fact that I am a marked man.

Rosmer: Ah—indeed.

Mortensgård: A marked man, Pastor Rosmer. You, above all men, should remember that; for I have chiefly you to thank for the scandal that branded me.

Rosmer: If I had then stood where I stand now, I should have dealt more gently with your offence.

Mortensgård: That I don't doubt. But

it is too late now. You have branded me once for all—branded me for life. I suppose you can scarcely understand what that means. But now you may perhaps come to feel the smart of it yourself, Pastor Rosmer.

Rosmer: I?

Mortensgård: Yes. You surely don't [illegible] find yourself a marked man before long.

Rosmer: In personal matters, Mr. Mortensgård, I feel myself secure from attack. My life is beyond reproach.

Mortensgård. [*With a sly smile.*] That's a large word, Mr. Rosmer.

Rosmer: Perhaps; but I have a right to use it.

Mortensgård: Even if you were to scrutinise your conduct as closely as you once scrutinised mine?

Rosmer: Your tone is very curious What are you hinting at? Anything definite?

Mortensgård: Yes, something definite Only one thing. But that might be bad enough, if malicious opponents got wind of it.

Rosmer: Will you have the kindness to let me hear what it is?

Mortensgård· Cannot you guess for yourself, Pastor?

Rosmer: No, certainly not. I have not the slightest idea.

Mortensgård: Well, well, I suppose I must come out with it then.—I have in my possession a strange letter, dated from Rosmersholm.

Rosmer: Miss West's letter, do you mean? Is it so strange?

Mortensgård· No, there's nothing strange about that. But I once received another letter from this house.

Rosmer: Also from Miss West?

Mortensgård. No, Mr. Rosmer.

Rosmer: Well then, from whom? From whom?

Mortensgård: From the late Mrs. Rosmer.

Rosmer: From my wife! You received a letter from my wife!

Mortensgård: I did.

Rosmer: When?

Mortensgård: Towards the close of Mrs. Rosmer's life. Perhaps about a year and a half ago. That is the letter I call strange.

[illegible] was anything in the letter to show it. When I call it strange, I mean in another sense.

Rosmer: And what in the world did my poor wife take it into her head to write to you about?

Mortensgård. I have the letter at home. She begins to the effect that she is living in great anxiety and fear; there are so many malicious people about here, she says; and they think of nothing but causing you trouble and injury.

Rosmer. Me?

Mortensgård Yes, so she says And then comes the strangest part of all. Shall I go on, Pastor Rosmer?

Rosmer: Assuredly! Tell me everything, without reserve.

Mortensgård The deceased lady begs and implores me to be magnanimous. She knows, she says, that it was her husband that had me dismissed from my post as teacher; and she conjured me by all that's sacred *not* to avenge myself.

Rosmer: How did she suppose you could avenge yourself?

Mortensgård. The letter says that if I should hear rumours of sinful doings at Rosmersholm, I am not to believe them; they are only spread abroad by wicked people who wish to make you unhappy.

Rosmer Is all that in the letter?

Mortensgård You may read it for yourself, sir, when you please.

Rosmer: But I don't understand—! What did she imagine the rumours to be about?

Mortensgård. Firstly, that the Pastor had deserted the faith of his fathers

"Beacon" that there has been a change in your views—that you have joined the party of freedom and progress?

Rosmer: Certainly you may. In fact, I beg you to make the announcement.

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Rosmer: [*With some surprise.*] Then you do not know—? Did not Miss West tell you that, too?

Mortensgård: What, Pastor Rosmer? Miss West was in a great hurry. She said I was to go upstairs and hear the rest from yourself.

Rosmer: Well, in that case I may tell you that I have emancipated myself entirely, and on every side. I have broken with all the dogmas of the Church. Henceforth they are nothing to me.

Mortensgård: [*Looks at him in amazement.*] Well—if the skies were to fall I couldn't be more—! Pastor Rosmer himself announces—.

Rosmer: Yes, I now stand where you have stood for many years. That, too, you may announce in the "Beacon" to-morrow.

Mortensgård: That too? No, my dear Pastor—excuse me— I don't think it would be wise to touch on that side of the matter.

Rosmer: Not touch on it?

Mortensgård: Not at present, I mean.

Rosmer: I don't understand—

Mortensgård: Well, you see, Pastor Rosmer—you probably don't know the ins and outs of things so well as I do. But, since you have come over to the party of freedom—and, as I hear from Miss West, you intend to take an active share in the movement—I presume you would like to be of as much service as possible, both to the cause in general and to this particular agitation.

Rosmer: Yes, that is my earnest wish.

Mortensgård: Good. But now I must tell you, Pastor Rosmer, that if you openly declare your defection from the Church, you tie your own hands at the very outset.

Rosmer: Do you think so?

Mortensgård: Yes; believe me, you won't be able to do much for the cause, in this part of the country at any rate. And besides—we have plenty of freethinkers already, Pastor Rosmer—I might almost say too many. What the party requires, is a Christian element—something that every one must respect. That is what we are sadly in need of. And, therefore, I advise you to keep your own counsel about what doesn't concern the public. That's my view of the matter, at least.

Rosmer: I understand. Then if I openly confess my apostasy, you dare not have anything to do with me?

Mortensgård: [*Shaking his head.*] I scarcely like to risk it, Pastor Rosmer. I have made it a rule for some time past not to support any one or anything that is actively opposed to the Church.

Rosmer: Then you have yourself returned to the Church?

Mortensgård: That concerns no one but myself.

Rosmer: Ah, so that is it. Now I understand you.

Mortensgård: Pastor Rosmer—you ought to remember that I—I in particular—have not full liberty of action.

Rosmer: What hampers you?

Mortensgård: The fact that I am a marked man.

Rosmer: Ah—indeed.

Mortensgård: A marked man, Pastor Rosmer. You, above all men, should remember that; for I have chiefly you to thank for the scandal that branded me.

Rosmer: If I had then stood where I stand now, I should have dealt more gently with your offence.

Mortensgård: That I don't doubt. But

too late now. You have branded me e for all—branded me for life. I pose you can scarcely understand at that means. But now you may rhaps come to feel the smart of it ourself, Pastor Rosmer.

Rosmer: I?

Mortensgård: Yes. You surely don't suppose that Rector Kroll and his set will ever forgive a desertion like yours? I hear the "County News" is going to be very savage in future. You, too, may find yourself a marked man before long.

Rosmer: In personal matters, Mr. Mortensgård, I feel myself secure from attack. My life is beyond reproach.

Mortensgård. [*With a sly smile*] That's a large word, Mr. Rosmer.

Rosmer: Perhaps, but I have a right to use it.

Mortensgård: Even if you were to scrutinise your conduct as closely as you once scrutinised mine?

Rosmer: Your tone is very curious What are you hinting at? Anything definite?

Mortensgård. Yes, something definite. Only one thing. But that might be bad nough, if malicious opponents got wind f it.

Rosmer: Will you have the kindness to let me hear what it is?

Mortensgård· Cannot you guess for yourself, Pastor?

Rosmer. No, certainly not. I have not the slightest idea.

Mortensgård. Well, well, I suppose I must come out with it then.—I have in my possession a strange letter, dated from Rosmersholm.

Rosmer: Miss West's letter, do you mean? Is it so strange?

Mortensgård: No, there's nothing strange about that. But I once received another letter from this house.

Rosmer: Also from Miss West?

Mortensgård. No, Mr. Rosmer.

Rosmer: Well then, from whom? From whom?

Mortensgård: From the late Mrs.

Rosmer: From my wife! You received a letter from my wife!

Mortensgård: I did.

Rosmer: When?

Mortensgård: Towards the close of Mrs. Rosmer's life. Perhaps about a year and a half ago. That is the letter I call strange.

Rosmer: I suppose you know that my wife's mind was affected at that time

Mortensgård: Yes; I know many people thought so. But I don't think there was anything in the letter to show it. When I call it strange, I mean in another sense.

Rosmer: And what in the world did my poor wife take it into her head to write to you about?

Mortensgård I have the letter at home She begins to the effect that she is living in great anxiety and fear, there are so many malicious people about here, she says, and they think of nothing but causing you trouble and injury.

Rosmer Me?

Mortensgård Yes, so she says And then comes the strangest part of all. Shall I go on, Pastor Rosmer?

Rosmer: Assuredly! Tell me everything, without reserve.

Mortensgård The deceased lady begs and implores me to be magnanimous. She knows, she says, that it was her husband that had me dismissed from my post as teacher, and she conjured me by all that's sacred not to avenge myself.

Rosmer How did she suppose you could avenge yourself?

Mortensgård: The letter says that if I should hear rumours of sinful doings at Rosmersholm, I am not to believe them; they are only spread abroad by wick people who wish to make you unhap

Rosmer. Is all that in the letter?

Mortensgård You may read it yourself, sir, when you please.

Rosmer: But I don't understan What did she imagine the rumours about?

Mortensgård Firstly, that the had deserted the faith of his

Your wife denied that absolutely—then. And next—h'm—

Rosmer: Next?

Mortensgård: Well, next she writes—rather confusedly—that she knows nothing of any sinful intrigue at Rosmersholm; that she has never been wronged in any way. And if any such rumours should get about, she implores me to say nothing of the matter in the "Beacon."

Rosmer: Is no name mentioned?

Mortensgård: None.

Rosmer: Who brought you the letter?

Mortensgård: I have promised not to say. It was handed to me one evening, at dusk.

Rosmer: If you had made inquiries at the time, you would have learnt that my poor, unhappy wife was not fully accountable for her actions.

Mortensgård: I did make inquiries, Pastor Rosmer. But I must say that was not the impression I received.

Rosmer: Was it not?—But what is your precise reason for telling me now about this incomprehensible old letter?

Mortensgård: To impress on you the necessity for extreme prudence, Pastor Rosmer.

Rosmer: In my life, do you mean?

Mortensgård: Yes. You must remember that from to-day you have ceased to be a neutral.

Rosmer: Then you have quite made up your mind that I must have something to conceal?

Mortensgård: I don't know why an emancipated man should refrain from living his life out as fully as possible. But, as I said before, be exceedingly cautious in future. If anything should get abroad that conflicts with current prejudices, you may be sure the whole liberal movement will have to suffer for it.—Good-bye, Pastor Rosmer.

Rosmer: Good-bye.

Mortensgård: I shall go straight to the office and have the great news put into the "Beacon."

Rosmer: Yes; omit nothing.

Mortensgård: I shall omit nothing that the public need know. [*He bows and goes out. Rosmer remains standing in the doorway while he goes down the stairs. The outer door is heard to close.*]

Rosmer: [*In the doorway, calls softly.*] Rebecca! Re— H'm. [*Aloud.*] Madam Helseth,—is Miss West not there?

Madam Helseth: [*From the hall.*] No, Pastor Rosmer, she's not here. [*The curtain at the back is drawn aside. Rebecca appears in the doorway.*]

Rebecca: Rosmer!

Rosmer: [*Turns.*] What! Were you in my room? My dear, what were you doing there?

Rebecca: [*Goes up to him.*] I was listening.

Rosmer: Oh, Rebecca, how could you?

Rebecca: I could not help it. He said it so hatefully—that about my morning gown—

Rosmer: Then you were there when Kroll—?

Rebecca: Yes. I wanted to know what was lurking in his mind.

Rosmer: I would have told you.

Rebecca: You would scarcely have told me all. And certainly not in his own words.

Rosmer: Did you hear everything, then?

Rebecca: Nearly everything, I think. I had to go downstairs for a moment when Mortensgård came.

Rosmer: And then you came back again—?

Rebecca: Don't be vexed with me, dear friend!

Rosmer: Do whatever you think right. You are mistress of your own actions.—But what do you say to all this, Rebecca—? Oh, I seem never to have needed you so much before!

Rebecca: Both you and I have been prepared for what must happen some time.

Rosmer: No, no—not for this.

Rebecca: Not for this?

Rosmer: I knew well enough that sooner or later our beautiful, pure

ndship might be misinterpreted and led. Not by Kroll—I could never have lieved such a thing of him—but by all ose other people with the coarse souls nd the ignoble eyes. Oh yes—I had eason enough for keeping our alliance so jealously concealed It was a dangerous secret.

Rebecca: Oh, why should we care what all those people think! We know in our own hearts that we are blameless.

Rosmer: Blameless? I? Yes, I thought so—till to-day But now—now, Rebecca—!

Rebecca: Well, what now?

Rosmer: How am I to explain Beata's terrible accusation?

Rebecca: [*Vehemently.*] Oh, don't speak of Beata! Don't think of Beata any more! You were just beginning to shake off the hold she has upon you, even in the grave

Rosmer: Since I have heard all this, she seems, in a ghastly sort of way, to be alive again.

Rebecca: Oh no—not that, Rosmer! Not that!

Rosmer: Yes, I tell you We must try to get to the bottom of this. What can possibly have led her to misinterpret things so fatally?

Rebecca: You are surely not beginning to doubt that she was on the very verge of insanity?

Rosmer: Oh yes—that is just what I can't feel quite certain of any longer And besides—even if she was—

Rebecca: If she was? Well, what then?

Rosmer: I mean—where are we to look for the determining cause that drove her morbid spirit over the borderline of madness?

Rebecca: Oh, why brood over problems no one can solve?

Rosmer. I cannot help it, Rebecca. I cannot shake off these gnawing doubts, however much I may wish to.

Rebecca: But it may become dangerous—this eternal dwelling upon one miserable subject.

Rosmer: [*Walks about restlessly, in thought.*] I must have betrayed myself in one way or another. She must have noticed how happy I began to feel from the time you came to us.

Rebecca: Yes but, dear, even if she did—?

Rosmer: Be sure it didn't escape her that we read the same books—that the interest of discussing all the new ideas drew us together. Yet I cannot understand it! I was so careful to spare her. As I look back, it seems to me I made it the business of my life to keep her in ignorance of all our interests. Did I not, Rebecca?

Rebecca Yes, yes; certainly you did.

Rosmer. And you too And yet—! Oh, it's terrible to think of! She must have gone about here—full of her morbid passion—saying never a word—watching us—noting everything—and misinterpreting everything.

Rebecca [*Pressing her hands together*] Oh, I should never have come to Rosmersholm!

Rosmer To think of all she must have suffered in silence! All the foulness her sick brain must have conjured up around us! Did she never say anything to you to put you at all on the alert?

Rebecca [*As if startled.*] To me! Do you think I should have stayed a day longer if she had?

Rosmer No, no, of course not —Oh, what a battle she must have fought! And alone too, Rebecca; desperate and quite alone!—and then, at last, that heart-breaking, accusing victory—in th mill-race [*Throws himself into the chai by the writing-table, with his elbows on t table and his face in his hands*]

Rebecca [*Approaches him cautiou from behind*] Listen, Rosmer If it w in your power to call Beata back—to you—to Rosmersholm—would you it?

Rosmer Oh, how do I know wh would or would not do? I can thir nothing but this one thing—that ca be recalled

Rebecca You were just beginn

live, Rosmer. You had begun. You had freed yourself—on every side. You felt so buoyant and happy—

Rosmer: Oh yes—I did indeed.—And now this crushing blow falls on me.

Rebecca: [*Behind him, rests her arms on the chair-back.*] How beautiful it was when we sat in the twilight, in the room downstairs, helping each other to lay out our new life-plans! You were to set resolutely to work in the world—the living world of to-day, as you said. You were to go as a messenger of emancipation from home to home; to win over minds and wills; to create noble-men around you in wider and wider circles. Noble-men.

Rosmer: Happy noble-men.

Rebecca: Yes—happy.

Rosmer: For it is happiness that ennobles, Rebecca.

Rebecca: Should you not say—sorrow as well? A great sorrow?

Rosmer: Yes—if one can get through it—over it—away from it.

Rebecca: That is what you must do.

Rosmer: [*Shakes his head gloomily.*] I shall never get over this—wholly. There will always be a doubt—a question left. I can never again know that luxury of the soul which makes life so marvellously sweet to live!

Rebecca: [*Bends over his chair-back, and says more softly.*] What is it you mean, Rosmer?

Rosmer: [*Looking up at her.*] Peaceful, happy innocence.

Rebecca: [*Recoils a step.*] Yes. Innocence. [*A short pause.*]

Rosmer: [*With his elbow on the table, leaning his head on his hand, and looking straight before him.*] And what extraordinary penetration she showed! How systematically she put all this together! First she begins to doubt my orthodoxy —— How could that occur to her? But it did occur to her; and then it grew to be a certainty. And then—yes, then of course it was easy for her to think all the rest possible. [*Sits up in his chair and runs his hands through his hair.*] Oh, all these horrible imaginings! I shall never get rid of them. I feel it. I know it. At any moment they will come rushing in upon me, and bring back the thought of the dead!

Rebecca: Like the White Horse of Rosmersholm.

Rosmer: Yes, like that. Rushing forth in the darkness—in the silence.

Rebecca: And because of this miserable figment of the brain, you will let slip the hold you were beginning to take upon the living world?

Rosmer: You may well think it hard. Yes, hard, Rebecca. But I have no choice. How could I ever leave this behind me?

Rebecca: [*Behind his chair.*] By entering into new relations.

Rosmer: [*Surprised, looks up.*] New relations?

Rebecca: Yes, new relations to the outside world. Live, work, act. Don't sit here brooding and groping among insoluble enigmas.

Rosmer: [*Rises.*] New relations? [*Walks across the floor, stops at the door and then comes back.*] One question occurs to me. Has it not occurred to you too, Rebecca?

Rebecca: [*Drawing breath with difficulty.*] Let me—hear—what it is.

Rosmer: What form do you think our relations will take after to-day?

Rebecca: I believe our friendship will endure—come what may.

Rosmer: That is not exactly what I meant. The thing that first brought us together, and that unites us so closely—our common faith in a pure comradeship between man and woman—

Rebecca: Yes, yes—what of that?

Rosmer: I mean, that such a relation—as this of ours—does it not presuppose a quiet, happy, peaceful life—?

Rebecca: What then?

Rosmer: But the life I must now look forward to is one of struggle and unrest and strong agitations. For I will live my life, Rebecca! I will not be crushed to earth by horrible possibilities. I will not

ave my course of life forced upon me, either by the living or by—any one else.

Rebecca: No, no—do not! Be an absolutely free man, Rosmer!

Rosmer. But can you not guess what is in my mind? Do you not know? Don't you see how I can best shake off all gnawing memories—all the unhappy past?

Rebecca: How?

Rosmer: By opposing to it a new, a living reality.

Rebecca: [*Feeling for the chair-back*] A living— What do you mean?

Rosmer. [*Comes nearer*] Rebecca—if I were to ask you—will you be my second wife?

Rebecca: [*For a moment speechless, then cries out with joy*] Your wife! Your—! I!

Rosmer: Come; let us try it We two will be one The place of the dead must stand empty no longer

Rebecca I—in Beata's place—!

Rosmer: Then she will be out of the saga—completely—for ever and ever.

Rebecca [*Softly, trembling*] Do you believe that, Rosmer?

Rosmer. It must be so! It must! I cannot—I will not go through life with a dead body on my back Help me to cast it off, Rebecca And let us stifle all memories in freedom, in joy, in passion You shall be to me the only wife I have ever had.

Rebecca: [*With self-command.*] Never speak of this again I will never be your wife.

Rosmer: What! Never! Do you not think you could come to love me? Is there not already a strain of love in our friendship?

Rebecca: [*Puts her hands over her ears as if in terror.*] Don't speak so, Rosmer! Don't say such things!

Rosmer: [*Seizes her arm.*] Yes, yes—there is a growing promise in our relation. Oh, I can see that you feel it too. Do you not, Rebecca?

Rebecca: [*Once more firm and calm.*] Listen to me. I tell you—if you persist in this, I will go away from Rosmersholm.

Rosmer: Go away! You! You cannot. It is impossible.

Rebecca: It is still more impossible that I should be your wife. Never in this world can I marry you.

Rosmer [*Looks at her in surprise.*] You say "can"; and you say it so strangely. Why can you not?

Rebecca. [*Seizes both his hands.*] Dear friend—both for your own sake and for mine—do not ask why. [*Lets go his hands*] Do not, Rosmer [*Goes towards the door on the left*]

Rosmer Henceforth I can think of nothing but that one question—why?

Rebecca. [*Turns and looks at him*] Then it is all over.

Rosmer. Between you and me?

Rebecca Yes.

Rosmer. It will never be all over between us two You will never leave Rosmersholm

Rebecca [*With her hand on the door handle*] No, perhaps I shall not But if you ask me again—it is all over

Rosmer All over? How—?

Rebecca For then I will go the w that Beata went Now you know Rosmer

Rosmer Rebecca—?

Rebecca [*In the doorway, nods sl*] Now you know it [*She goes out*]

Rosmer [*Stares, thunderstruck, door, and says to himself*] Wha this?

WHAT THE STRUCTURE OF ACT II INDICATES

Although Act II, on first reading, may seem complex or even c it has a definite structure, and the meaning is clarified by the After the brief "prologue" between Rebecca and Rosmer Ibse

the rest of the act into three scenes—Rosmer and Kroll, Rosmer and Mortensgård, and Rosmer and Rebecca. Thus we can see pretty clearly what Ibsen is doing: he is showing Rosmer, the "liberal" idealist, under the impact of three different influences—that of the belligerent conservative, that of the crusading liberal journalist, and that of an intimate friend, also a liberal. Whereas in Act I it looked as if the play might hinge on a *direct conflict between conservative and liberal*, we now see, by the form of Act II, that Ibsen is venturing into a far more complicated situation and showing the idealist faced with a whole series of conflicts, of different kinds. Secondly, the fact that all these interviews take place at Rosmersholm and that Rosmer is the center of attention throughout show that Ibsen is concerned not with the town conflict but with what happens to the mind and spirit of Rosmer under various stresses. Further, the climactic scene of the act is that between Rebecca and Rosmer: what occurs between them is, of all the actions in the play, the most remote from the political battle in the town.

How does Ibsen intend us to view the characters in this manysided situation? Take, first of all, Rosmer. In Act I we saw him as decent, well-intentioned, kindly, truthful, idealistic. He is trusting: he has no idea that anyone will misconstrue his relationship with Rebecca. In Act II we see that he believes in the gentlemanliness of the combatants; he is willing to be examined by Kroll and to tell the whole truth; he is shocked by the suggestion of "free love"; he is willing to publish every detail of his change of principle; he had planned to create "happy noble-men." But above all, as a liberal he believes in complete freedom of action; he says to Rebecca, "Do whatever you think is right. You are the mistress of your own actions." Ibsen then throws this liberal idealist into an actual world of combat and invites us to observe how he fares in such a world.

Irony in Act II. The whole act is suffused with the irony of Rosmer's miscalculations of the way of the world. (Later on, in another play, we shall see Congreve handling the matter differently—endeavoring to show a type of idealism maintaining itself in an actual world. But there the mode is comic.) First, he finds that his old friend Kroll is willing to put the worst possible interpretation upon his conduct; what is still more ironic, Kroll will even *accept* the worst, if Rosmer will only keep quiet about it. Kroll shifts from principle to expediency, and he is ready for "war to the knife."

Notice how neatly Ibsen relates this interview to the next. Rosmer expects better things of the liberal Mortensgård. But it is ironical that Mortensgård too is for expediency, wants to hush things up, and isn't concerned about Rosmer's private life. In what other details does Mortensgård resemble Kroll?

Thus, Ibsen suggests a still more basic irony: that Kroll and Mortensgard actually have more in common than Rosmer has with either of them. Rosmer's devotion to quiet reasonableness is made to appear naïve in a world of merciless competing factions that are willing to use any weapons, reasonable or not, that they can get their hands on. Rosmer takes an overly

ple view of life, and he receives an education in the complexities of an ual world.

The Past. Ibsen goes on to find a still heavier complication for Rosmer: osmer has to contend not only with the present but also with the past. lere, too, Ibsen uses irony in developing the situation, for Rosmer had hought he was escaping from the past. We recall Madam Helseth's remarking early in Act I that the dead cling to Rosmersholm; in this act Rebecca complains that Beata has not lost her hold upon Rosmer. Both turn out to be right—and in an unforeseen sense.

Several technical questions arise here. Does Ibsen seem to stack the cards against Rosmer? Is it necessary to give him a "past"? Or may we say rather that Rosmer does not really have a "past" more than any other man—that the past with which he is saddled is, in a sense, the creation of men seeking the most dangerous weapons and unscrupulous in their search? In that sense, any man has a "past"; the whole record of his life may in some way be used against him. Rosmer, we might argue, then, is not a special but a universal figure.

Second, Ibsen has carefully motivated this use of Rosmer's past. He informed us of it at the start, and very early in the play Rosmer and Rebecca showed relief that Kroll was not antagonistic to them. The revelation concerning Beata is not used for melodramatic surprise

Third, Beata has important symbolic value "The Past" (rather than "a past") is part of every man, so to speak, it cannot be escaped and it must be faced. More specifically, of course, Beata represents the more orthodox phase of Rosmer's life, just as Rebecca represents the new, liberal phase; Rebecca's antagonism to Beata (aside from its psychological meaning) suggests the philosophical split in Rosmer himself. Rational liberalism, Ibsen implies, can never be wholly separate from the old orthodoxy, or at least from its influence. This is the most pervasive irony of the play.

Finally, how does Ibsen introduce the dead Beata into the current situation? Here, the student can largely evaluate the techniques himself. Why is it natural for Kroll to start talking about Beata in Act II, to questio Rosmer about her, and to pass on new information to him? In the Morten gård scene, Ibsen has a slightly harder problem In the first place, Ibs has to bring the conversation around naturally to the subject of Rosme private life, not a wholly natural or easy one for Mortensgård Notice steps by which he does this. Second, we have to accept the fact that Be actually wrote a letter to Mortensgård What facts tend to make plausible? What is ironic about the fact that she did write to him?

To show further the effect of the past, Ibsen introduces Rosmer's censure of Mortensgård. Why does this not seem unmotivated Mortensgård speaks of it? Notice precisely how it complicates Ros career as a liberal: Rosmer cannot come completely into the open *b* Mortensgård cannot tell the whole truth *because* he is a marke *because* of the criticism which Rosmer, in his conservative day

brought down upon him. How does the influence of the Mortensgård heritage parallel the influence of the Beata heritage? Note how both combine to re-emphasize Rosmer's oversimplified view of life; as a man of reason he has separated things into reasonable little compartments—private life, public life. But in practice, facts will not behave according to such logical distinctions.

The Scene with Rebecca. To make clear what Ibsen is doing, we have, for the purpose of this discussion, broken down the act into strands of action which, in the play itself, actually do not appear separately but are closely interwoven. After two-thirds of Act II we see Rosmer facing, and almost crushed by, a world of unforeseen complexity. Ibsen now uses the last part of Act II to show Rosmer trying to accommodate himself to this world—a personal, private experience in which only Rebecca participates. But Ibsen conceives of the scene dramatically: it consists not only of Rosmer's talking matters over with Rebecca and himself, but rather of a readjustment of his relations with Rebecca. Note the ironic contrast between this dialogue and his final dialogue with Rebecca in Act I.

Even in presenting this effort at clarification and adjustment, Ibsen maintains the ironic tone: the complications keep piling up—both in Rebecca and in himself. Rebecca, for instance, has been eavesdropping, a fact which, though he appears willing to accept it, obviously disappoints him. She is irritable on the subject of Beata. But most of all, she responds in a peculiar way to his proposal of marriage; the act ends with Rosmer's expression of shocked incomprehension of a new element in Rebecca. Ibsen's climactic irony is the new complication within Rosmer himself: all the other events in the act have come to make him doubt his own innocence. He is less able than ever to face the outer world because he cannot now face himself. In his uncertainty, he takes another step, which in the light of preceding events shows itself to involve reversal: he asks Rebecca to marry him. Thus the man whose relationship with a woman has been pure, who has not even been conscious of being in love with her, who is proudly aware of the wrong done him by the suspicions of Kroll and Mortensgård, now does the one thing which will be calculated to confirm those suspicions.

Forward Movement. Aside from keeping Act II moving forward by creating new situations that will have to be dealt with, Ibsen also introduces a kind of undercurrent of anticipation of which we should be aware. First of all, there is Rosmer's shock at Beata's having apparently known of his growing religious skepticism, a fact of which no explanation is made to us here. Second, there is Beata's understanding of the relationship between Rebecca and Rosmer; Beata seems to have gone far beyond the apparently available evidence. Then there is Rebecca's irritation when Rosmer talks of Beata, a matter which Ibsen certainly wishes us to notice. When Rosmer asks Rebecca whether Beata ever said anything which would put her on the alert, Ibsen gives, with Rebecca's reply, a stage direction which is very important—"As if startled." (Here we see an unusual responsibility placed upon the actress; her interpretation of the line would be very important

timulating the imagination. The words alone do not convey much.) ally, there is Rebecca's mysterious refusal of Rosmer's offer of marriage, t to mention her threat to go "the way that Beata went." By all of these nexplained matters Ibsen is arousing our expectations of things to come.

QUESTIONS

1. Is it plausible to have Rosmer propose to Rebecca just after hearing Kroll's and Mortensgård's aspersions upon his relationship with her and after feeling shocked remorse at thinking about what Beata must have suffered in believing he was in love with Rebecca? Rosmer defends himself against the charge that he is in love with Rebecca; then he declares his love to her. Does this reversal violate probability for the sake of a striking effect? In attempting to frame an answer, the student might consider the following matters: (1) Rosmer is the sort of man who accepts relationships unconsciously without defining them overtly to himself. (2) In a sense Kroll and Mortensgård actually give Rosmer the idea of marriage; their accusations, even though Rosmer is to deny them sincerely, do make him conscious of marriage as a possibility. (3) But this suggestion of marriage, once made, is accidentally carried on by Rebecca herself when she answers Rosmer's despairing, "How could I ever leave this behind me?" by saying "By entering into new relations." (4) Rosmer needs to lean on someone, his recent shocks increase the need, and perhaps cause the need to assert itself overtly here The student must decide whether, in the light of such considerations, Ibsen has motivated the step adequately, whether he has shrewdly penetrated the psychology of the "noble" but essentially weak man.

2. Notice the various lines—especially those by Kroll—which are in tended to indicate that Rosmer is weak Does Ibsen intend to imply tha all pure, theoretical liberalism is weak? Does Rosmer seem typical, or special case? Are we supposed to despise him? Or are there reasons for admiring him at the same time that we may regret his weakness?

Note, in this connection, the treatment of Brendel, who at some po is not unlike Rosmer. In Act II we learn that he has failed (how, by way, is his drunkenness prepared for in Act I?). Could this news b tended to foreshadow any future events?

3. We have thus far stressed consistently the interrelationship and present in which Rosmer is involved. A similar interrelation that of private and public life. Where does Rosmer fail to foresee derstand this relationship?

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brought down upon him. How does the influence of the Mortensgård heritage parallel the influence of the Beata heritage? Note how both combine to re-emphasize Rosmer's oversimplified view of life; as a man of reason he has separated things into reasonable little compartments—private life, public life. But in practice, facts will not behave according to such logical distinctions.

The Scene with Rebecca. To make clear what Ibsen is doing, we have, for the purpose of this discussion, broken down the act into strands of action which, in the play itself, actually do not appear separately but are closely interwoven. After two-thirds of Act II we see Rosmer facing, and almost crushed by, a world of unforeseen complexity. Ibsen now uses the last part of Act II to show Rosmer trying to accommodate himself to this world—a personal, private experience in which only Rebecca participates. But Ibsen conceives of the scene dramatically: it consists not only of Rosmer's talking matters over with Rebecca and himself, but rather of a readjustment of his relations with Rebecca. Note the ironic contrast between this dialogue and his final dialogue with Rebecca in Act I.

Even in presenting this effort at clarification and adjustment, Ibsen maintains the ironic tone: the complications keep piling up—both in Rebecca and in himself. Rebecca, for instance, has been eavesdropping, a fact which, though he appears willing to accept it, obviously disappoints him. She is irritable on the subject of Beata. But most of all, she responds in a peculiar way to his proposal of marriage; the act ends with Rosmer's expression of shocked incomprehension of a new element in Rebecca. Ibsen's climactic irony is the new complication within Rosmer himself: all the other events in the act have come to make him doubt his own innocence. He is less able than ever to face the outer world because he cannot now face himself. In his uncertainty, he takes another step, which in the light of preceding events shows itself to involve reversal: he asks Rebecca to marry him. Thus the man whose relationship with a woman has been pure, who has not even been conscious of being in love with her, who is proudly aware of the wrong done him by the suspicions of Kroll and Mortensgård, now does the one thing which will be calculated to confirm those suspicions.

Forward Movement. Aside from keeping Act II moving forward by creating new situations that will have to be dealt with, Ibsen also introduces a kind of undercurrent of anticipation of which we should be aware. First of all, there is Rosmer's shock at Beata's having apparently known of his growing religious skepticism, a fact of which no explanation is made to us here. Second, there is Beata's understanding of the relationship between Rebecca and Rosmer; Beata seems to have gone far beyond the apparently available evidence. Then there is Rebecca's irritation when Rosmer talks of Beata, a matter which Ibsen certainly wishes us to notice. When Rosmer asks Rebecca whether Beata ever said anything which would put her on the alert, Ibsen gives, with Rebecca's reply, a stage direction which is very important—"*As if startled.*" (Here we see an unusual responsibility placed upon the actress; her interpretation of the line would be very important

stimulating the imagination. The words alone do not convey much.) ially, there is Rebecca's mysterious refusal of Rosmer's offer of marriage, t to mention her threat to go "the way that Beata went." By all of these nexplained matters Ibsen is arousing our expectations of things to come.

QUESTIONS

1. Is it plausible to have Rosmer propose to Rebecca just after hearing Kroll's and Mortensgård's aspersions upon his relationship with her and after feeling shocked remorse at thinking about what Beata must have suffered in believing he was in love with Rebecca? Rosmer defends himself against the charge that he is in love with Rebecca; then he declares his love to her. Does this reversal violate probability for the sake of a striking effect? In attempting to frame an answer, the student might consider the following matters: (1) Rosmer is the sort of man who accepts relationships unconsciously without defining them overtly to himself. (2) In a sense Kroll and Mortensgård actually give Rosmer the idea of marriage; their accusations, even though Rosmer is to deny them sincerely, do make him conscious of marriage as a possibility. (3) But this suggestion of marriage, once made, is accidentally carried on by Rebecca herself when she answers Rosmer's despairing, "How could I ever leave this behind me?" by saying "By entering into new relations" (4) Rosmer needs to lean on someone, his recent shocks increase the need, and perhaps cause the need to assert itself overtly here. The student must decide whether, in the light of such considerations, Ibsen has motivated the step adequately, whether he has shrewdly penetrated the psychology of the "noble" but essentially weak man

2 Notice the various lines—especially those by Kroll—which are intended to indicate that Rosmer is weak. Does Ibsen intend to imply that all pure, theoretical liberalism is weak? Does Rosmer seem typical, or a special case? Are we supposed to despise him? Or are there reasons for our admiring him at the same time that we may regret his weakness?

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5. After studying Act II we may find several things in Act I more meaningful. Once Rosmer says to Kroll (p. 267b, 10 ff.), "I am not in love with the spirit that is in the ascendant, nor with either of the contending parties. I will try to bring together men from both sides—" Again, "Men are growing evil in this struggle. Peace and joy and mutual forbearance must once more enter into our souls" (p. 268a, 46 ff.). What connections can you find between such lines and later events?

6. In the brief opening scene between Rosmer and Rebecca, what is done that is necessary to make the rest of the act work out as it does? Do we learn anything more about the character of Rebecca? Does it fit in with what we saw of her in Act I?

7. Is the symbolism of the white horse made any clearer in this act? Does the use of the symbol seem to point toward future events?

8. What is the significance of Mortensgård's not committing himself about his membership in the church? With what does this contrast?

9. We have spoken of Beata as symbolizing the orthodox phase of Rosmer's career. Can you find any evidence for or against this interpretation? Might Rosmer's childlessness be intended to be symbolic? In Act I Kroll remarked that Rebecca had filled the house with flowers, whereas Beata could not stand flowers. Again, Rosmer says to Kroll (Act I, p. 267a, 33–35), "A new summer has blossomed in my soul. I see with my eyes grown young again." What do such lines suggest? Can you find others with similar suggestiveness?

10. We have spoken of Rosmer's ironic inability to understand how other people will react to a situation. Note how this is suggested even by his earlier conduct—in the relations among Beata, Rebecca, and himself. What is ironic about his belief in the purity of his own motives?

11. What aspects of liberalism appear to be represented by Brendel, Rosmer, Rebecca, Mortensgård?

ACT THIRD

[The sitting-room at Rosmersholm. The window and the entrance door are open. The sun is shining outside. Forenoon.]

[*Rebecca West, dressed as in the first Act, stands at the window, watering and arranging the flowers. Her crochet-work lies in the arm-chair. Madam Helseth is moving about, dusting the furniture with a feather-brush.*]

Rebecca: [*After a short silence.*] I can't understand the Pastor remaining so long upstairs to-day.

Madam Helseth: Oh, he often does that. But he'll soon be down now, I should think.

Rebecca: Have you seen anything of him?

Madam Helseth: I caught a glimpse of him when I went upstairs with his coffee. He was in his bedroom, dressing.

Rebecca: I asked because he was a little out of sorts yesterday.

Madam Helseth. He didn't look well. I wonder if there isn't something amiss between him and his brother-in-law.

Rebecca: What do you think it can be?

Madam Helseth: I couldn't say. Perhaps it's that Mortensgård that has been setting them against each other.

becca: Likely enough.—Do you anything of this Peter Mortens-

Madam Helseth: No indeed. How ld you think so, Miss? A fellow like ?

Rebecca: Do you mean because he its such a low paper?

Madam Helseth Oh, it's not only hat.—You must have heard, Miss, that e had a child by a married woman that had been deserted by her husband?

Rebecca. Yes, I have heard of it. But it must have been long before I came here.

Madam Helseth: It's true he was very young at the time; and she should have known better. He wanted to marry her too; but of course he couldn't do that. And I don't say he hasn't paid dear for it.—But, good Lord, Mortensgård has got on in the world since those days There's a many people run after him now.

Rebecca: Yes, most of the poor people bring their affairs to him when they're in any trouble.

Madam Helseth Ah, and others too, perhaps, besides the poor folk—

Rebecca: [*Looks at her furtively*] Indeed.

Madam Helseth: [*By the sofa, dusting away vigorously*] Perhaps the last people you would think likely to, Miss

Rebecca [*Busy with the flowers*] Come, now, that's only an idea of yours, Madam Helseth. You can't be sure of what you're saying

Madam Helseth You think I can't, Miss? But I can tell you I am. Why—if you must know it—I once took a letter in to Mortensgård myself.

Rebecca- [*Turning*] No—did you?

Madam Helseth: Yes, indeed I did And a letter that was written here at Rosmersholm too.

Rebecca: Really, Madam Helseth?

Madam Helseth: Yes, that it was And it was on fine paper, and there was a fine red seal on it too.

Rebecca: And it was given to you to deliver? Then, my dear Madam Helseth, it's not difficult to guess who wrote it.

Madam Helseth: Well?

Rebecca: It must have been something that poor Mrs. Rosmer, in her morbid state—

Madam Helseth: It's you that say that, Miss, not me.

Rebecca· But what was in the letter? Oh, I forgot—you can't know that.

Madam Helseth: H'm; what if I did know it, all the same?

Rebecca. Did she tell you what she was writing about?

Madam Helseth· No, she didn't exactly do that. But Mortensgård, when he'd read it, he began questioning me backwards and forwards and up and down, so that I soon guessed what was in it

Rebecca Then what do you think it was? Oh my dear good Madam Helseth, do tell me.

Madam Helseth. Oh no, Miss Not for the whole world.

Rebecca Oh you can surely tell me. We two are such good friends.

Madam Helseth: Lord preserve me from telling you anything about that, Miss I can only tell you that *it* was something horrible that they'd got the poor sick lady to believe.

Rebecca Who had got her to believe it?

Madam Helseth Wicked people, Miss Wicked people

Rebecca Wicked—?

Madam Helseth. Yes, I say it again. They must have been real wicked people.

Rebecca And who do you think it could have been?

Madam Helseth· Oh, I know well enough what to think. But Lord forbid I should say anything To be sure there's a certain lady in the town—h'm!

Rebecca· I can see that you mea Mrs Kroll.

Madam Helseth Ah, she's a fine or she is She has always been the gr lady with me And she's never had a too much love for you neither.

Rebecca: Do you think Mrs. Rosmer was in her right mind when she wrote that letter to Mortensgård?

Madam Helseth: It's a queer thing a person's mind, Miss. Clean out of her mind I don't think she was.

Rebecca: But she seemed to go distracted when she learned that she must always be childless. It was that that unsettled her reason.

Madam Helseth: Yes, poor lady, that was a dreadful blow to her.

Rebecca: [*Takes up her crochet and sits in a chair by the window.*] But after all—don't you think it was a good thing for the Pastor, Madam Helseth?

Madam Helseth: What, Miss?

Rebecca: That there were no children. Don't you think so?

Madam Helseth: H'm, I'm sure I don't know what to say about that.

Rebecca: Oh yes, believe me, it was fortunate for him. Pastor Rosmer is not the man to have crying children about his house.

Madam Helseth: Ah, Miss, little children don't cry at Rosmersholm.

Rebecca: [*Looks at her.*] Don't cry?

Madam Helseth: No. As long as people can remember, children have never been known to cry in this house.

Rebecca: That's very strange.

Madam Helseth: Yes; isn't it? But it runs in the family. And then there's another strange thing. When they grow up, they never laugh. Never, as long as they live.

Rebecca: Why, how extraordinary—

Madam Helseth: Have you ever once heard or seen the Pastor laugh, Miss?

Rebecca: No—now that I think of it, I almost believe you are right. But I don't think any one laughs much in this part of the country.

Madam Helseth: No, they don't. They say it began at Rosmersholm. And then I suppose it spread round about, as if it was catching-like.

Rebecca: You are a very wise woman, Madam Helseth.

Madam Helseth: Oh, Miss, you mustn't sit there and make fun of me. [*Listens.*] Hush, hush—here's the Pastor coming down. He doesn't like to see dusting going on. [*She goes out to the right.*] [*Johannes Rosmer, with his hat and stick in his hand, enters from the hall.*]

Rosmer: Good morning, Rebecca.

Rebecca: Good morning, dear. [*A moment after—crocheting.*] Are you going out?

Rosmer: Yes.

Rebecca: It's a beautiful day.

Rosmer: You didn't look in on me this morning.

Rebecca: No, I didn't. Not to-day.

Rosmer: Do you not intend to in future?

Rebecca: Oh, I don't know yet, dear.

Rosmer: Has anything come for me?

Rebecca: The "County News" has come.

Rosmer: The "County News"?

Rebecca: There it is on the table.

Rosmer: [*Puts down his hat and stick.*] Is there anything—?

Rebecca: Yes.

Rosmer: And you didn't send it up?

Rebecca: You will read it soon enough.

Rosmer: Oh, indeed? [*Takes the paper and reads, standing by the table.*]—What! —"We cannot warn our readers too earnestly against unprincipled renegades."[*Looks at her.*] They call me a renegade, Rebecca.

Rebecca: They mention no names.

Rosmer: That makes no difference. [*Reads on.*] "Secret traitors to the good cause."—"Judas-natures, who make brazen confession of their apostasy as soon as they think the most convenient and—profitable moment has arrived." "Ruthless befouling of a name honoured through generations"—"in the confident hope of a suitable reward from the party in momentary power." [*Lays down the paper on the table.*] And they can say such things of me!—Men who have known me so long and so well! Things they themselves don't believe.

ings they know there is not a word truth in—they print them all the me.

Rebecca: That is not all.

Rosmer: [*Takes up the paper again.*] "Inexperience and lack of judgment the only excuse"—"pernicious influence—possibly extending to matters which, for the present, we do not wish to make subjects of public discussion or accusation." [*Looks at her.*] What is this?

Rebecca: It is aimed at me, plainly enough.

Rosmer: [*Lays down the paper.*] Rebecca,—this is the conduct of dishonourable men.

Rebecca: Yes, they need scarcely be so contemptuous of Mortensgård.

Rosmer: [*Walks about the room.*] Something must be done. All that is good in human nature will go to ruin, if this is allowed to go on. But it shall not go on! Oh, what a joy—what a joy it would be to me to let a little light into all this gloom and ugliness!

Rebecca: [*Rises.*] Ah yes, Rosmer. In that you have a great and glorious object to live for.

Rosmer: Only think, if I could rouse them to see themselves as they are, teach them to repent and blush before their better natures; bring them together in mutual forbearance—in love, Rebecca!

Rebecca: Yes, put your whole strength into that, and you must succeed.

Rosmer: I think success must be possible. Oh, what a delight it would be then to live one's life! No more malignant wrangling, only emulation. All eyes fixed on the same goal. Every mind, every will pressing forward—upward—each by the path its nature prescribes for it. Happiness for all—through all. [*Happens to look out of the window, starts, and says sadly.*] Ah! Not through me.

Rebecca: Not——? Not through you?

Rosmer: Nor for me.

Rebecca: Oh Rosmer, do not let such doubts take hold of you.

Rosmer: Happiness—dear Rebecca—happiness is above all things the calm, glad certainty of innocence.

Rebecca: [*Looks straight before her.*] Yes, innocence—

Rosmer: Oh, you cannot know what guilt means. But I—

Rebecca: You least of all!

Rosmer: [*Points out of the window.*] The mill-race.

Rebecca: Oh Rosmer—! [*Madam Helseth looks in at the door.*]

Madam Helseth: Miss West!

Rebecca: Presently, presently. Not now.

Madam Helseth: Only a word, Miss.

[*Rebecca goes to the door. Madam Helseth tells her something. They whisper together for a few moments. Madam Helseth nods and goes out.*]

Rosmer: [*Uneasily.*] Was it anything for me?

Rebecca: No, only something about the house-work.—You ought to go out into the fresh air, dear Rosmer. You should take a good long walk.

Rosmer: [*Takes up his hat.*] Yes, come. Let us go together.

Rebecca: No, dear, I can't just now. You must go alone. But shake off all these gloomy thoughts. Promise me.

Rosmer: I am afraid I shall never shake them off.

Rebecca: Oh, that such baseless fancies should take so strong a hold of you—!

Rosmer: Not so baseless I am afraid Rebecca. I lay awake all night thinkin it over and over. Perhaps Beata sa clearly after all.

Rebecca: In what?

Rosmer: In her belief that I loved y Rebecca.

Rebecca: Right in that!

Rosmer: [*Lays his hat down o table.*] The question that haunts this: were we two not deceivin selves all the time—when we call relation friendship?

Rebecca: You mean that it m well have been called—?

Rosmer: —love. Yes, Rebec

is what I mean. Even while Beata was alive, all my thoughts were for you. It was you alone I longed for. It was when you were by my side that I felt the calm gladness of utter content. If you think it over, Rebecca—did we not feel for each other from the first a sort of sweet, secret child-love—desireless, dreamless? Was it not so with you? Tell me.

Rebecca: [*Struggling with herself.*] Oh—I don't know what to answer.

Rosmer: And it was this close-linked life in and for each other that we took for friendship. No, Rebecca—our bond has been a spiritual marriage—perhaps from the very first. That is why there is guilt on my soul. I had no right to such happiness—it was a sin against Beata.

Rebecca: No right to live happily? Do you believe that, Rosmer?

Rosmer: She looked at our relation with the eyes of her love—judged it after the fashion of her love. Inevitably. Beata could not have judged otherwise than she did.

Rebecca: But how can you accuse yourself because of Beata's delusion?

Rosmer: It was love for me—her kind of love—that drove her into the mill-race. That is an immovable fact, Rebecca. And that is what I can never get over.

Rebecca: Oh, think of nothing but the great, beautiful task you have devoted your life to.

Rosmer: [*Shakes his head.*] It can never be accomplished, dear. Not by me. Not after what I have come to know.

Rebecca: Why not by you?

Rosmer: Because no cause ever triumphs that has its origin in sin.

Rebecca: [*Vehemently.*] Oh, these are only ancestral doubts—ancestral fears—ancestral scruples. They say the dead come back to Rosmersholm in the shape of rushing white horses. I think this shows that it is true.

Rosmer: Be that as it may; what does it matter, so long as I cannot rid myself of the feeling? And believe me, Rebecca, it is as I tell you The cause that is to win a lasting victory must have for its champion a happy, an innocent man.

Rebecca: Is happiness so indispensable to you, Rosmer?

Rosmer: Happiness? Yes, dear,—it is.

Rebecca: To you, who can never laugh?

Rosmer: Yes, in spite of that. Believe me, I have a great capacity for happiness.

Rebecca: Now go for your walk, dear. A good long walk. Do you hear?—See, here is your hat. And your stick too.

Rosmer: [*Takes both.*] Thanks. And you won't come with me?

Rebecca: No, no; I can't just now.

Rosmer: Very well, then. You are with me none the less. [*He goes out by the entrance door. Rebecca waits a moment, cautiously watching his departure from behind the open door; then she goes to the door on the right.*]

Rebecca: [*Opens the door, and says in a low tone.*] Now, Madam Helseth. You can show him in now. [*Goes towards the window.*] [*A moment after, Rector Kroll enters from the right. He bows silently and formally, and keeps his hat in his hand.*]

Kroll: He has gone out?

Rebecca: Yes.

Kroll: Does he usually stay out long?

Rebecca: Yes, he does. But one cannot count on him to-day. So if you don't care to meet him—

Kroll: No, no. It is you I want to speak to,—quite alone.

Rebecca: Then we had better not lose time. Sit down, Rector. [*She sits in the easy-chair by the window. Rector Kroll sits on a chair beside her.*]

Kroll: Miss West—you can scarcely imagine how deeply and painfully I have taken this to heart—this change in Johannes Rosmer.

Rebecca: We expected it would be so—at first.

Kroll: Only at first?

Rebecca: Rosmer was confident that sooner or later you would join him.

Kroll: I?

Rebecca: You and all his other friends.

Kroll: Ah, there you see! That shows the infirmity of his judgment in all that concerns men and practical life.

Rebecca: But after all—since he feels it a necessity to emancipate himself on all sides—

Kroll. Yes, but wait—that is just what I do not believe.

Rebecca. What do you believe then?

Kroll: I believe that you are at the bottom of it all.

Rebecca: It is your wife who has put that in your head, Rector Kroll

Kroll· No matter who has put it in my head. What is certain is that I feel a strong suspicion—an exceedingly strong suspicion—when I think things over, and piece together all I know of your behaviour ever since you came here.

Rebecca. [*Looks at him.*] I seem to recollect a time when you felt an exceedingly strong faith in me, dear Rector I might almost call it a warm faith.

Kroll. [*In a subdued voice.*] Whom could you not bewitch—if you tried?

Rebecca: Did I try—?

Kroll· Yes, you did I am no longer such a fool as to believe that there was any feeling in the matter. You simply wanted to get a footing at Rosmersholm —to strike root here—and in that I was to serve you. Now I see it

Rebecca. You seem utterly to have forgotten that it was Beata who begged and implored me to come out here?

Kroll: Yes, when you had bewitched her too. Can the feeling she came to entertain for you be called friendship? It was adoration—almost idolatry. It developed into—what shall I call it?—a sort of desperate passion.—Yes, that is the right word for it.

Rebecca· Be so good as to recollect the state your sister was in So far as I am concerned, I don't think any one can accuse me of being hysterical.

Kroll: No; that you certainly are not. But that makes you all the more dangerous to the people you want to get into your power. It is easy for you to weigh your acts and calculate consequences—just because your heart is cold.

Rebecca: Cold? Are you *so* sure of that?

Kroll: I am quite certain of it now. Otherwise you could never have lived here year after year without faltering in the pursuit of your object. Well, well—you have gained your end. You have got him and everything into your power. But in order to do so, you have not scrupled to make him unhappy.

Rebecca: That is not true. It is not I—it is you yourself that have made him unhappy.

Kroll I?

Rebecca· Yes, when you led him to imagine that he was responsible for Beata's terrible end

Kroll· Does he feel that so deeply, then?

Rebecca· How can you doubt it? A mind so sensitive as his—

Kroll. I thought that an emancipated man, so-called, was above all such scruples —But there we have *it*! Oh yes —I admit I knew how it would be. The descendant of the men that look down on us from these walls—how could he hope to cut himself adrift from all that has been handed down without a break from generation to generation?

Rebecca [*Looks down thoughtfully.*] Johannes Rosmer's spirit is deeply rooted in his ancestry. That is very certain

Kroll Yes, and you should have taken that *fact* into consideration, if you had felt any affection for him But that sort of consideration was no doubt beyond you. There is such an immeasurable difference between your antecedents and his

Rebecca What antecedents do yo[illegible] mean?

Kroll I am speaking of your origin your family antecedents, Miss We[illegible]

Rebecca Oh, indeed! Yes it is [illegible] true that I come of [illegible] Nevertheless—

Kroll: I am not thinking of rank and position. I allude to your moral antecedents.

Rebecca: Moral—? In what sense?

Kroll: The circumstances of your birth.

Rebecca: What do you mean?

Kroll: I only mention the matter because it accounts for your whole conduct.

Rebecca: I do not understand this. You must explain.

Kroll: I really did not suppose you could require an explanation. Otherwise it would have been very odd that you should have let Dr. West adopt you—

Rebecca: [*Rises.*] Ah! Now I understand.

Kroll: —and that you should have taken his name. Your mother's name was Gamvik.

Rebecca: [*Walks across the room.*] My father's name was Gamvik, Rector Kroll.

Kroll: Your mother's business must have brought her very frequently into contact with the parish doctor.

Rebecca: Yes, it did.

Kroll: And then he takes you into his house—as soon as your mother dies. He treats you harshly; and yet you stay with him. You know that he won't leave you a halfpenny—as a matter of fact, you only got a case full of books—and yet you stay on; you bear with him; you nurse him to the last.

Rebecca: [*Stands by the table, looking scornfully at him.*] And you account for all this by assuming that there was something immoral—something criminal about my birth?

Kroll: I attribute your care for him to involuntary filial instinct. Indeed I believe your whole conduct is determined by your origin.

Rebecca: [*Vehemently.*] But there is not a single word of truth in what you say! And I can prove it! Dr. West did not come to Finmark till after I was born.

Kroll: Excuse me, Miss West. He settled there the year before. I have assured myself of that.

Rebecca: You are mistaken, I say! You are utterly mistaken.

Kroll: You told me the day before yesterday that you were nine-and-twenty—in your thirtieth year.

Rebecca: Indeed! Did I say so?

Kroll: Yes, you did. And I can calculate from that—

Rebecca: Stop! You needn't calculate. I may as well tell you at once: I am a year older than I give myself out to be.

Kroll: [*Smiles incredulously.*] Really! I am surprised! What can be the reason of that?

Rebecca: When I had passed twenty-five, it seemed to me I was getting altogether too old for an unmarried woman. And so I began to lie about my age.

Kroll: You? An emancipated woman! Have you prejudices about the age for marriage?

Rebecca: Yes, it was idiotic of me—idiotic and absurd. But some folly or other will always cling to us, not to be shaken off. We are made so.

Kroll: Well, so be it; but my calculation may be right, none the less. For Dr. West was up there on a short visit the year before he got the appointment.

Rebecca: [*With a vehement outburst.*] It is not true!

Kroll: Is it not true?

Rebecca: No. My mother never spoke of any such visit.

Kroll: Did she not?

Rebecca: No, never. Nor Dr. West either; not a word about it.

Kroll: Might not that be because they both had reasons for suppressing a year? Just as you have done, Miss West. Perhaps it is a family foible.

Rebecca: [*Walks about clenching and wringing her hands.*] It is impossible. You want to cheat me into believing it. This can never, never be true. It cannot! Never in this world—

Kroll: [*Rises.*] My dear Miss West—why in heaven's name are you so terribly

...ted? You quite frighten me! What I to think—to believe—? ·

Rebecca· Nothing! You are to think and believe nothing.

Kroll: Then you must really tell me how you can take this affair—this possibility—so terribly to heart.

Rebecca: [*Controlling herself.*] It is perfectly simple, Rector Kroll. I have no wish to be taken for an illegitimate child.

Kroll: Indeed! Well well, let us be satisfied with that explanation—in the meantime But in that case you must still have a certain—prejudice on that point too?

Rebecca. Yes, I suppose I have.

Kroll: Ah, I fancy it is much the same with most of what you call your "emancipation." You have read yourself into a number of new ideas and opinions You have got a sort of smattering of recent discoveries in various fields—discoveries that seem to overthrow certain principles which have hitherto been held impregnable and unassailable But all this has only been a matter of the intellect, Miss West—a superficial acquisition It has not passed into your blood.

Rebecca: [*Thoughtfully*] Perhaps you are right

Kroll: Yes, look into your own mind, and you will see! And if this is the case with you, one may easily guess how it must be with Johannes Rosmer. It is sheer, unmitigated madness—it is running blindfold to destruction—for him to think of coming openly forward and confessing himself an apostate! Only think—a man of his sensitive nature! Imagine him disowned and persecuted by the circle of which he has always formed a part—exposed to ruthless attacks from all the best people in the community! He is not—he never can be the man to endure all that

Rebecca· He must endure it! It is too late now for him to retreat

Kroll. Not at all too late. By no ... What has happened can be ... least explained away as a mere temporary aberration, however deplorable. But—one measure is certainly indispensable.

Rebecca· And what is that?

Kroll: You must get him to legalise the position, Miss West.

Rebecca: His position towards me?

Kroll: Yes. You must make him do that.

Rebecca: Then you absolutely cannot clear your mind of the idea that our position requires to be—legalised, as you call it?

Kroll: I would rather not go into the matter too closely But I believe I have noticed that it is nowhere easier to break through all so-called prejudices than in —h'm—

Rebecca. In the relation between man and woman, you mean?

Kroll Yes,—to speak plainly—I think so.

Rebecca [*Wanders across the room and looks out at the window.*] I could almost say—I wish you were right, Rector Kroll.

Kroll. What do you mean by that? You say it so strangely.

Rebecca Oh well—please let us drop the subject. Ah,—there he comes.

Kroll Already! Then I will go

Rebecca [*Goes towards him.*] No—please stay There is something I wa... you to hear

Kroll· Not now I don't feel as ... could bear to see him

Rebecca I beg you to stay Do! If ... you will regret it by-and-by It ... last time I shall ask you for any...

Kroll [*Looks at her in surpri... puts down his hat*] Very well, Mi... —so be it, then [*A short silen... Johannes Rosmer enters from the...*

Rosmer [*Sees the Rector, an... the doorway*] What! Are you...

Rebecca He did not wish to ... dear[1]

Kroll [*Involuntarily* ...

[1] In the original, Rebecca ... Rosmer as "du" for the first ... presence

Rebecca: Yes, Rector Kroll, Rosmer and I say "dear" to each other. That is one result of our "position."

Kroll: Was that what you wanted me to hear?

Rebecca: That—and a little more.

Rosmer: [*Comes forward.*] What is the object of this visit?

Kroll: I wanted to try once more to stop you and win you back to us.

Rosmer: [*Points to the newspaper.*] After what appears in that paper?

Kroll: I did not write it.

Rosmer: Did you make the slightest effort to prevent its appearance?

Kroll: That would have been to betray the cause I serve. And, besides, it was not in my power.

Rebecca: [*Tears the paper into shreds, crushes up the pieces and throws them behind the stove.*] There! Now it is out of sight. And let it be out of mind too. For there will be nothing more of that sort, Rosmer.

Kroll: Ah, if you could only make sure of that!

Rebecca: Come, let us sit down, dear. All three of us. And then I will tell you everything.

Rosmer: [*Seats himself mechanically.*] What has come over you, Rebecca? This unnatural calmness—what is it?

Rebecca: The calmness of resolution. [*Seats herself.*] Pray sit down too, Rector. [*Rector Kroll seats himself on the sofa.*]

Rosmer: Resolution, you say? What resolution?

Rebecca: I am going to give you back what you require in order to live your life. Dear friend, you shall have your happy innocence back again!

Rosmer: What can you mean?

Rebecca: I have only to tell you something. That will be enough.

Rosmer: Well!

Rebecca: When I came down here from Finmark—along with Dr. West—it seemed to me that a great, wide new world was opening up before me. The Doctor had taught me all sorts of things—all the fragmentary knowledge of life that I possessed in those days. [*With a struggle and in a scarcely audible voice.*] And then—

Kroll: And then?

Rosmer: But Rebecca—I know all this.

Rebecca: [*Mastering herself.*] Yes, yes—you are right. You know enough about this.

Kroll: [*Looks hard at her.*] Perhaps I had better go.

Rebecca: No, please stay where you are, my dear Rector. [*To Rosmer.*] Well, you see, this was how it was—I wanted to take my share in the life of the new era that was dawning, with all its new ideas.—Rector Kroll told me one day that Ulric Brendel had had great influence over you while you were still a boy. I thought it must surely be possible for me to carry on his work.

Rosmer: You came here with a secret design—?

Rebecca: We two, I thought, should march onward in freedom, side by side. Ever onward. Ever farther and farther to the front. But between you and perfect emancipation there rose that dismal, insurmountable barrier.

Rosmer: What barrier do you mean?

Rebecca: I mean this, Rosmer: You could grow into freedom only in the clear, fresh sunshine—and here you were pining, sickening in the gloom of such a marriage.

Rosmer: You have never before spoken to me of my marriage in that tone.

Rebecca: No, I did not dare to, for I should have frightened you.

Kroll: [*Nods to Rosmer.*] Do you hear that?

Rebecca: [*Goes on.*] But I saw quite well where your deliverance lay—your only deliverance. And then I went to work.

Rosmer: Went to work? In what way?

Kroll: Do you mean that—?

Rebecca: Yes, Rosmer— [*Rises.*] Sit still. You too, Rector Kroll. But now

nust out. It was not you, Rosmer. · u are innocent. It was I that lured— at ended in luring Beata out into the ıths of delusion— ·

Rosmer: [*Springs up.*] Rebecca!

Kroll. [*Rises from the sofa.*] The paths of delusion!

Rebecca. The paths—that led to the mill-race Now you know it both of you.

Rosmer· [*As if stunned.*] But I don't understand— What is it she is saying? I don't understand a word—!

Kroll. Oh yes, Rosmer, I am beginning to understand.

Rosmer: But what did you do? What can you possibly have told her? There was nothing—absolutely nothing to tell!

Rebecca She came to know that you were working yourself free from all the old prejudices

Rosmer: Yes, but that was not the case at that time.

Rebecca· I knew that it soon would be.

Kroll· [*Nods to Rosmer*] Aha!

Rosmer And then? What more? I must know all now.

Rebecca: Some time after—I begged and implored her to let me go away from Rosmersholm.

Rosmer Why did you want to go—then?

Rebecca: I did not want to go; I wanted to stay here, where I was But I told her that it would be best for us all—that I should go away in time. I gave her to understand that if I stayed here any longer, I could not—I could not tell—what might happen

Rosmer· Then this is what you said and did!

Rebecca· Yes, Rosmer

Rosmer. This is what you call "going to work."

Rebecca: [*In a broken voice*] I called it so, yes

Rosmer: [*After a pause*] Have you confessed all now, Rebecca?

Rebecca: Yes

Kroll: Not all

Rebecca· [*Looks at him in fear.*] What ...ld there be?

Kroll· Did you not at last give Beata to understand that it was necessary—not only that it would be wisest, but that it was necessary—both for your own sake and Rosmer's, that you should go away somewhere—as soon as possible? Well?

Rebecca: [*Low and indistinctly.*] Perhaps I did say something of the sort.

Rosmer: [*Sinks into the arm-chair by the window.*] And this tissue of lies and deceit she—my unhappy, sick wife believed in! Believed in it so firmly! So immovably! [*Looks up at Rebecca.*] And she never turned to me. Never said one word to me! Oh, Rebecca,—I can see it in your face—you dissuaded her from it!

Rebecca. She had conceived a fixed idea that she, as a childless wife, had no right to be here And then she imagined that it was her duty to you to efface herself

Rosmer And you—you did nothing to disabuse her of the idea?

Rebecca No.

Kroll Perhaps you confirmed her in it? Answer me! Did you not?

Rebecca I believe she may have understood me so

Rosmer· Yes, yes—and in everything she bowed before your will And she did efface herself! [*Springs up.*] How could you—how could you play this ghastly game!

Rebecca. It seemed to me I had t choose between your life and her Rosmer

Kroll [*Severely and impressivel*] That choice was not for you to make

Rebecca [*Vehemently*] You th then that I was cool and calculating self-possessed all the time! I was no same woman then that I am now stand here telling it all Besides, are two sorts of will in us I beh wanted Beata away, by one me another, but I never really believ it would come to pass As I felt forward, at each step I vent seemed to hear something withi out No farther! Not a step fart

yet I could not stop. I had to venture the least little bit farther. Only one hair's-breadth more. And then one more—and always one more.—And then it happened.—That is the way such things come about. [*A short silence.*]

Rosmer: [*To Rebecca.*] What do you think lies before you now? After this?

Rebecca: Things must go with me as they will. It doesn't greatly matter.

Kroll: Not a word of remorse! Is it possible you feel none?

Rebecca: [*Coldly putting aside his question.*] Excuse me, Rector Kroll—that is a matter which concerns no one but me. I must settle it with myself.

Kroll: [*To Rosmer.*] And this is the woman you are living under the same roof with—in the closest intimacy! [*Looks round at the pictures.*] Oh if those that are gone could see us now!

Rosmer: Are you going back to town?

Kroll: [*Takes up his hat.*] Yes. The sooner the better.

Rosmer: [*Does the same.*] Then I will go with you.

Kroll: Will you? Ah yes, I was sure we had not lost you for good.

Rosmer: Come then, Kroll! Come! [*Both go out through the hall without looking at Rebecca.*] [*After a moment, Rebecca goes cautiously to the window and looks out through the flowers.*]

Rebecca: [*Speaks to herself under her breath.*] Not over the foot-bridge to-day either. He goes round. Never across the mill-race. Never. [*Leaves window.*] Well, well, well! [*Goes and pulls the bell-rope; a moment after, Madam Helseth enters from the right.*]

Madam Helseth: What is it, Miss?

Rebecca: Madam Helseth, would you be so good as to have my trunk brought down from the garret?

Madam Helseth: Your trunk?

Rebecca: Yes—the brown sealskin trunk, you know.

Madam Helseth: Yes, yes. But, Lord preserve us—are you going on a journey, Miss?

Rebecca: Yes—now I am going on a journey, Madam Helseth.

Madam Helseth: And immediately!

Rebecca: As soon as I have packed up.

Madam Helseth: Well, I've never heard the like of that! But you'll come back again soon, Miss, of course?

Rebecca: I shall never come back again.

Madam Helseth: Never! Dear Lord, what will things be like at Rosmersholm when you're gone, Miss? And the poor Pastor was just beginning to be so happy and comfortable.

Rebecca: Yes, but I have taken fright to-day, Madam Helseth.

Madam Helseth: Taken fright! Dear, dear! how was that?

Rebecca: I thought I saw something like a glimpse of white horses.

Madam Helseth: White horses! In broad daylight!

Rebecca: Oh, they are abroad early and late—the white horses of Rosmersholm. [*With a change of tone.*] Well,—about the trunk, Madam Helseth.

Madam Helseth: Yes, yes. The trunk. [*Both go out to the right.*]

QUESTIONS ON ACT III

1. This act may be conveniently divided into five scenes. Find the dividing lines and try to determine the general contribution of each scene to the forward movement. Are all the exits and entrances adequately motivated? How does Ibsen try to make plausible the necessary departure of Rosmer?

2. Who is the most important character in the act? To whom does the act "belong"? Does Ibsen seem to be changing "focus," to be getting off on a side issue? Or can you justify his way of handling things here?

IBSEN, ROSMERSHOLM

3. When Ibsen has Madam Helseth talk further about Beata's letter to ortensgård, it is clear that he wished again to direct our attention to the t. Why? Is the matter brought up naturally? Do we learn anything ore about the character of Mortensgård? Are the references to Mrs. Kroll sed later?

4. In talking with Madam Helseth, Rebecca is made to insist on two things: (1) the unsound mind of Beata; (2) the general rightness, for Rosmer, of the way things have gone. What does Ibsen intend to suggest here? Does what she says continue any of the suggestions made in Act II or anticipate later developments in Act II?

5. Madam Helseth's story that children never cry and adults never laugh at Rosmersholm may be taken at one level, of course, as folklore. May we assume that Ibsen also intends us to see a symbolic meaning? Is it a means of attacking the traditional life at Rosmersholm? Or, simply a way of suggesting that a man is bound by his tradition, whether or not one can think of "rational" ways of improving it (for instance, by introducing more laughter)?

6. How does Rosmer's dialogue with Rebecca develop logically from the substance of Act II? What new stage of development does Rosmer reach here? Is the development "in character"? Is it consistent of Rebecca to wish to charge Rosmer's doubts up to "ancestral doubts—ancestral fears—ancestral scruples"? How does this argument re-emphasize the basic conflict of the play?

7. Trace the steps by which the conversation between Kroll and Rebecca comes plausibly around to the subject of Rebecca's background and past. In what way do the events here develop an ironic parallel with events in Act II?

8. Is Rebecca's confession a melodramatic surprise, or is there evidence hat Ibsen has been trying to make us foresee it?

9. How is this scene rendered more meaningful by the fact that we have already been given a very clear picture of Ulric Brendel? What does

10. Note the various references to white horses in this act. What does Ibsen intend to do by means of these references?

11. The reference to the foot-bridge picks up a matter first mentioned i the first scene in Act I. Study the two passages and see what meaning yo find in them at this point.

ACT FOURTH

[The sitting-room at Rosmersholm Late evening A lighted lamp, with a shade over it, on the table]

[*Rebecca West stands by the table, packing some small articles in a hand-bag Her cloak, hat, and the white crocheted shawl are hanging over the back of the s Madam Helseth enters from the right*

Madam Helseth [*Speaks in a voice and appears ill at ease*] All things have been taken down, They are in the kitchen passage.

Rebecca Very well You have c the carriage?

Madam Helseth Yes. The co

wants to know what time he ought to be here.

Rebecca: About eleven o'clock, I think. The steamer starts at midnight.

Madam Helseth: [*Hesitates a little.*] But the Pastor? If he shouldn't be home by that time?

Rebecca: I shall go all the same. If I don't see him, you can tell him that I will write to him—a long letter. Tell him that.

Madam Helseth: Yes, writing—that may be all very well. But, poor Miss West—I do think you should try to speak to him once more.

Rebecca: Perhaps so. And yet—perhaps not.

Madam Helseth: Well—that I should live to see this! I never thought of such a thing.

Rebecca: What did you think then, Madam Helseth?

Madam Helseth: Well, I certainly thought Pastor Rosmer was a more dependable man than this.

Rebecca: Dependable?

Madam Helseth: Yes, that's what *I* say.

Rebecca: Why, my dear Madam Helseth, what do you mean?

Madam Helseth: I mean what's right and true, Miss. He shouldn't get out of it in this way, that he shouldn't.

Rebecca: [*Looks at her.*] Come now, Madam Helseth, tell me plainly: what do you think is the reason I am going away?

Madam Helseth: Well, Heaven forgive us, I suppose it can't be helped, Miss. Ah, well, well, well! But I certainly don't think the Pastor's behaving handsome-like. Mortensgård had some excuse; for her husband was alive, so that they two couldn't marry, however much they wanted to. But as for the Pastor—h'm!

Rebecca: [*With a faint smile.*] Could you have believed such a thing of Pastor Rosmer and me?

Madam Helseth: No, never in this world. At least, I mean—not until to-day.

Rebecca: But to-day, then—?

Madam Helseth: Well,—after all the horrible things that they tell me the papers are saying about the Pastor—

Rebecca: Aha!

Madam Helseth: For the man that can go over to Mortensgård's religion—good Lord, I can believe anything of him.

Rebecca: Oh yes, I suppose so. But what about me? What have you to say about me?

Madam Helseth: Lord preserve us, Miss—I don't see that there's much to be said against you. It's not so easy for a lone woman to be always on her guard, that's certain.—We're all of us human, Miss West.

Rebecca: That's very true, Madam Helseth. We are all of us human.—What are you listening to?

Madam Helseth: [*In a low voice.*] Oh Lord,—if I don't believe that's him coming.

Rebecca: [*Starts.*] After all then—? [*Resolutely.*] Well well; so be it. [*Johannes Rosmer enters from the hall.*]

Rosmer: [*Sees the hand-bag, etc., turns to Rebecca, and asks:*] What does this mean?

Rebecca: I am going.

Rosmer: At once?

Rebecca: Yes. [*To Madam Helseth.*] Eleven o'clock then.

Madam Helseth: Very well, Miss. [*Goes out to the right.*]

Rosmer: [*After a short pause.*] Where are you going to, Rebecca?

Rebecca: North, by the steamer.

Rosmer: North? What takes you to the North?

Rebecca: It was there I came from.

Rosmer: But you have no ties there now.

Rebecca: I have none here either.

Rosmer: What do you think of doing?

Rebecca: I don't know. I only want to have done with it all.

Rosmer: To have done with it?

Rebecca: Rosmersholm has broken me.

Rosmer: [*His attention aroused.*] Do you say that?

Rebecca: Broken me utterly and hopelessly.—I had a free and fearless will when I came here. Now I have bent my neck under a strange law.—From this day forth, I feel as if I had no courage for anything in the world

Rosmer. Why not? What is the law that you say you have—?

Rebecca. Dear, don't let us talk of that just now —What happened between you and the Rector?

Rosmer: We have made peace.

Rebecca: Ah yes; so that was the end

Rosmer: He gathered all our old friends together at his house They have made it clear to me that the work of ennobling the minds of men—is not for me.—And besides, it is hopeless in itself, Rebecca.—I shall let it alone.

Rebecca: Yes, yes—perhaps it is best so.

Rosmer: Is that what you say now? Do you think so now?

Rebecca: I have come to think so—in the last few days.

Rosmer. You are lying, Rebecca.

Rebecca: Lying—!

Rosmer: Yes, you are lying You have never believed in me. You have never believed that I was man enough to carry the cause through to victory

Rebecca I believed that we two together could do it

Rosmer: That is not true You thought that you yourself could do something great in life, and that you could use me to further your ends I was to be a serviceable instrument to you—that is what you thought.

Rebecca: Listen to me, Rosmer—

Rosmer: [*Seats himself listlessly on the sofa.*] Oh, what is the use? I see through it all now—I have been like a glove in your hands.

Rebecca: Listen, Rosmer Hear what I have to say. It will be fot the last time [*Sits in a chair close to the sofa.*] I intended to write you all about it—when I was back in the North. But I daresay it is best that you should hear it at once.

Rosmer: Have you more confessions to make?

Rebecca: The greatest of all is to come.

Rosmer: The greatest?

Rebecca: What you have never suspected. What gives light and shade to all the rest.

Rosmer: [*Shakes his head.*] I don't understand you at all.

Rebecca: It is perfectly true that I once schemed to gain a footing at Rosmersholm. I thought I could not fail to turn things to good account here. In one way or the other—you understand.

Rosmer: Well, you accomplished your ends.

Rebecca: I believe I could have accomplished anything, anything in the world—at that time For I had still my fearless, free-born will I knew no scruples—I stood in awe of no human tie.—But then began what has broken my will—and cowed me so pitiably for all my days.

Rosmer What began? Do not speak in riddles

Rebecca It came over me,—this wild, uncontrollable passion— Oh, Rosmer—!

Rosmer Passion? You—! For what?

Rebecca For you

Rosmer [*Tries to spring up*] What is this?

Rebecca [*Stops him*] Sit still, dear, there is more to tell

Rosmer And you mean to say—that you have loved me—in that way!

Rebecca I thought that it should be called love—then Yes, I thought it was love But it was not It was what I said. It was a wild, uncontrollable passion

Rosmer. [*With difficulty.*] Rebecca, is it really you—you yourself—that you are speaking of?

Rebecca Yes, would you believe, Rosmer?

Rosmer Then it was because of this—that under the influence of this—that you "went to work," as you

Rebecca: It came upon me like a storm on the sea. It was like one of the storms we sometimes have in the North in the winter time. It seizes you—and whirls you along with it—wherever it will. There is no resisting it.

Rosmer: And so it swept the unhappy Beata into the mill-race.

Rebecca: Yes; for it was a life-and-death struggle between Beata and me at that time.

Rosmer: Assuredly you were the strongest at Rosmersholm. Stronger than Beata and I together.

Rebecca: I judged you rightly in so far that I was sure I could never reach you until you were a free man, both in circumstances—and in spirit.

Rosmer: But I don't understand you, Rebecca. You—yourself—your whole conduct is an insoluble riddle to me. I am free now—both in spirit and in circumstances. You have reached the very goal you aimed at from the first. And yet—

Rebecca: I have never stood farther from my goal than now.

Rosmer: And yet I say—when I asked you yesterday—begged you to be my wife—you cried out, as if in fear, that it could never be.

Rebecca: I cried out in despair, Rosmer.

Rosmer: Why?

Rebecca: Because Rosmersholm has sapped my strength. My old fearless will has had its wings clipped here. It is crippled! The time is past when I had courage for anything in the world. I have lost the power of action, Rosmer.

Rosmer: Tell me how this has come about.

Rebecca: It has come about through my life with you.

Rosmer: But how? How?

Rebecca: When I was left alone with you here,—and when you had become yourself again—

Rosmer: Yes, yes?

Rebecca: —for you were never quite yourself so long as Beata lived—

Rosmer: I am afraid you are right there.

Rebecca: But when I found myself sharing your life here,—in quiet—in solitude,—when you showed me all your thoughts without reserve—every tender and delicate feeling, just as it came to you—then the great change came over me. Little by little, you understand. Almost imperceptibly—but at last with such overwhelming force that it reached to the depths of my soul.

Rosmer: Oh, is this true, Rebecca?

Rebecca: All the rest—the horrible sense-intoxicated desire—passed far, far away from me. All the whirling passions settled down into quiet and silence. Rest descended on my soul—a stillness as on one of our northern bird-cliffs under the midnight sun.

Rosmer: Tell me more of this. Tell me all you can.

Rebecca: There is not much more, dear. Only this—it was love that was born in me. The great self-denying love, that is content with life, as we two have lived it together.

Rosmer: Oh, if I had only had the faintest suspicion of all this!

Rebecca: It is best as it is. Yesterday—when you asked me if I would be your wife—I cried out with joy—

Rosmer: Yes, did you not, Rebecca! I thought that was the meaning of your cry.

Rebecca: For a moment, yes. I had forgotten myself. It was my old buoyant will that was struggling to be free. But it has no energy left now—no power of endurance.

Rosmer: How do you account for what has happened to you?

Rebecca: It is the Rosmer view of life—or your view of life, at any rate—that has infected my will.

Rosmer: Infected?

Rebecca: And made it sick. Enslaved it to laws that had no power over me before. You—life with you—has ennobled my mind—

Rosmer: Oh that I could believe it!

becca: You may safely believe it! Rosmer view of life ennobles. But *Shaking her head*] But—but—

Rosmer. But—? Well?

Rebecca: —but it kills happiness.

Rosmer Do you think so, Rebecca?

Rebecca: My happiness, at any rate.

Rosmer: Yes, but are you so certain of that? If I were to ask you again now—? If I were to beg and entreat you—?

Rebecca Dear,—never speak of this again! It is impossible—! For you must know, Rosmer, I have a—a past behind me.

Rosmer More than what you have told me?

Rebecca Yes Something different and something more

Rosmer [*With a faint smile.*] Is it not strange, Rebecca? Some such idea has crossed my mind now and then

Rebecca It has? And yet—? Even so—?

Rosmer I never believed it. I only played with it—in my thoughts, you understand

Rebecca If you wish it, I will tell you all, at once

Rosmer. [*Turning it off*] No, no! I will not hear a word. Whatever it may be—I can forget it.

Rebecca But I cannot

Rosmer Oh Rebecca—!

Rebecca: Yes, Rosmer—this is the terrible part of it. that now, when all life's happiness is within my grasp—my heart is changed, and my own past cuts me off from it.

Rosmer Your past is dead, Rebecca It has no hold on you any more—it is no part of you—as you are now

Rebecca. Oh, you know that these are only phrases, dear And innocence? Where am I to get that from?

Rosmer: [*Sadly*] Ah,—innocence

Rebecca Yes, innocence. That is the source of peace and happiness That was the vital truth you were to implant in the coming generation of happy noble-

Rosmer: Oh, don't remind me of that. It was only an abortive dream, Rebecca —an immature idea, that I myself no longer believe in.—Ah no, we cannot be ennobled from without, Rebecca.

Rebecca [*Softly.*] Not even by tranquil love, Rosmer?

Rosmer: [*Thoughtfully.*] Yes—that would be the great thing—the most glorious in life, almost—if it were so. [*Moves uneasily.*] But how can I be certain of that? How convince myself?

Rebecca: Do you not believe me, Rosmer?

Rosmer Oh Rebecca—how can I believe in you, fully? You who have all this while been cloaking, concealing such a multitude of things!—Now you come forward with something new. If you have a secret purpose in all this, tell me plainly what it is Is there anything you want to gain by it? You know that I will gladly do everything I can for you

Rebecca: [*Wringing her hands.*] Oh this killing doubt—! Rosmer—Rosmer—!

Rosmer. Yes, is it not terrible, Rebecca? But I cannot help it. I shall never be able to shake off the doubt. I can never be absolutely sure that you are mine in pure and perfect love

Rebecca. Is there nothing in the depths of your own heart that bears witness to the transformation in me? And tells you that it is due to you—and you alone?

Rosmer. Oh Rebecca—I no longer b lieve in my power of transforming a one My faith in myself is utterly de I believe neither in myself nor in yo

Rebecca [*Looks darkly at him*] T how will you be able to live your lif

Rosmer That I don t know I ca imagine how I don't think I can l —And I know of nothing in the that is worth living for

Rebecca Oh, life—life will re self Let us hold fast to it, Ro We shall leave it soon enough

Rosmer [*Springs up* ... give me my faith again! My fai

Rebecca! My faith in your love! Proof! I must have proof!

Rebecca: Proof? How can I give you proof—?

Rosmer: You must! [*Walks across the room.*] I cannot bear this desolation—this horrible emptiness—this—this— [*A loud knock at the hall door.*]

Rebecca: [*Starts up from her chair.*] Ah—did you hear that? [*The door opens. Ulric Brendel enters. He has a white shirt on, a black coat and a good pair of boots, with his trousers tucked into them. Otherwise he is dressed as in the first act. He looks excited.*]

Rosmer: Ah, is it you, Mr. Brendel?

Brendel: Johannes, my boy—hail—and farewell!

Rosmer: Where are you going so late?

Brendel: Downhill.

Rosmer: How—?

Brendel: I am going homewards, my beloved pupil. I am home-sick for the mighty Nothingness.

Rosmer: Something has happened to you, Mr. Brendel! What is it?

Brendel: So you observe the transformation? Yes—well you may. When I last set foot in these halls—I stood before you as a man of substance, and slapped my breast-pocket.

Rosmer: Indeed! I don't quite understand—

Brendel: But as you see me this night, I am a deposed monarch on the ash-heap that was my palace.

Rosmer: If there is anything *I* can do for you—

Brendel: You have preserved your child-like heart, Johannes. Can you grant me a loan?

Rosmer: Yes, yes, most willingly!

Brendel: Can you spare me an ideal or two?

Rosmer: What do you say?

Brendel: One or two cast-off ideals. It would be an act of charity. For I'm cleaned out, my boy. Ruined, beggared.

Rebecca: Have you not delivered your lecture?

Brendel: No, seductive lady. What do you think? Just as I am standing ready to pour forth the horn of plenty, I make the painful discovery that I am bankrupt.

Rebecca: But all your unwritten works—?

Brendel: For five-and-twenty years I have sat like a miser on his double-locked treasure-chest. And then yesterday—when I open it and want to display the treasure—there's none there! The teeth of time had ground it into dust. There was nix and nothing in the whole concern.

Rosmer: But are you so sure of that?

Brendel: There's no room for doubt, my dear fellow. The President has convinced me of it.

Rosmer: The President?

Brendel: Well well—His Excellency then. *Ganz nach Belieben.*

Rosmer: What do you mean?

Brendel: Peter Mortensgård, of course.

Rosmer: What?

Brendel: [*Mysteriously.*] Hush, hush, hush! Peter Mortensgård is the lord and leader of the future. Never have I stood in a more august presence. Peter Mortensgård has the secret of omnipotence. He can do whatever he will.

Rosmer: Oh, don't believe that.

Brendel: Yes, my boy! For Peter Mortensgård never wills more than he can do. Peter Mortensgård is capable of living his life without ideals. And that, do you see—that is just the mighty secret of action and of victory. It is the sum of the whole world's wisdom. *Basta!*

Rosmer: [*In a low voice.*] Now I understand—why you leave here poorer than you came.

Brendel: Bien! Then take a *Beispiel* by your ancient teacher. Rub out all that he once imprinted on your mind. Build not thy house on shifting sand. And look ahead—and feel your way—before you build on this exquisite creature, who here lends sweetness to your life.

Rebecca: Is it me you mean?

Brendel: Yes, my fascinating mermaid.

Rebecca: Why am I not to be built on?

Brendel: [*Comes a step nearer.*] I gather that my former pupil has a great cause to carry forward to victory.

Rebecca What then—?

Brendel: Victory is assured. But—mark me well—on one indispensable condition.

Rebecca: Which is—?

Brendel: [*Taking her gently by the wrist.*] That the woman who loves him shall gladly go out into the kitchen and hack off her tender, rosy-white little finger—here—just here at the middle joint. Item, that the aforesaid loving woman—again gladly—shall slice off her incomparably-moulded left ear. [*Lets her go, and turns to Rosmer*] Farewell, my conquering Johannes

Rosmer Are you going now? In the dark night?

Brendel: The dark night is best Peace be with you [*He goes. There is a short silence in the room.*]

Rebecca: [*Breathes heavily*] Oh, how close and sultry it is here! [*Goes to the window, opens it, and remains standing by it.*]

Rosmer: [*Sits down in the arm-chair by the stove.*] There is nothing else for it after all, Rebecca. I see it You must go away.

Rebecca: Yes, I see no choice

Rosmer. Let us make the most of our last hour. Come here and sit by me

Rebecca: [*Goes and sits on the sofa*] What do you want to say to me, Rosmer?

Rosmer: First, I want to tell you that you need not feel any anxiety about your future.

Rebecca [*Smiles*] H'm, my future.

Rosmer: I have long ago arranged for everything. Whatever may happen, you are provided for

Rebecca: That too, my dear one?

Rosmer: You might surely have known that

...: It is many a long day since I ...ght to such things ...ught things

would always remain as they were between us.

Rebecca: Yes, I thought so.

Rosmer: So did I. But if I were to go—

Rebecca: Oh, Rosmer—you will live longer than I.

Rosmer. Surely my worthless life lies in my own hands.

Rebecca: What is this? You are never thinking of—!

Rosmer Do you think it would be so strange? After this pitiful, lamentable defeat! I, who was to have borne a great cause on to victory—have I not fled from the battle before it was well begun?

Rebecca Take up the fight again, Rosmer! Only try—and you shall see, you will conquer. You will ennoble hundreds—thousands of minds. Only try!

Rosmer. Oh Rebecca—I, who no longer believe in my own mission!

Rebecca But your mission has stood the test already You have ennobled on... human being at least—me you have e... nobled for the rest of my days

Rosmer Oh—if I dared believe yo...

Rebecca [*Pressing her hands togeth...*] Oh Rosmer,—do you know of nothi... nothing that could make you belie...

Rosmer [*Starts as if in fear*] ... speak of that! Keep away from ... Rebecca! Not a word more

Rebecca Yes, this is precisely ... must speak about Do you know ... thing that would kill the doub... know of nothing in the world

Rosmer It is well for you ... It is well for ... do not know —It is well for ... —I

Rebecca No, no, no —I ... put off in this way! If you k... thing that would absolve ... eyes, I claim as my right to...

Rosmer [*As if impell... will to speak*] Then let u... that a great love is in yo... me your mind has been... so? Is your reckoning... Shall we try to prove th...

Rebecca I am ready

Rosmer: At any time?

Rebecca: Whenever you please. The sooner the better.

Rosmer: Then let me see, Rebecca,—if you for my sake—this very evening — [*Breaks off.*] Oh, no, no, no!

Rebecca: Yes, Rosmer! Yes! Tell me, and you shall see.

Rosmer: Have you the courage—have you the will—gladly, as Ulric Brendel said—for my sake, to-night—gladly—to go the same way that Beata went?

Rebecca: [*Rises slowly from the sofa; almost voiceless.*] Rosmer—!

Rosmer: Yes, Rebecca—that is the question that will for ever haunt me—when you are gone. Every hour in the day it will return upon me. Oh, I seem to see you before my very eyes. You are standing out on the foot-bridge—right in the middle. Now you are bending forward over the railing—drawn dizzily downwards, downwards towards the rushing water! No—you recoil. You have not the heart to do what she dared.

Rebecca: But if I had the heart to do it? And the will to do it gladly? What then?

Rosmer: I should have to believe you then. I should recover my faith in my mission. Faith in my power to ennoble human souls. Faith in the human soul's power to attain nobility.

Rebecca: [*Takes up her shawl slowly, and puts it over her head; says with composure.*] You shall have your faith again.

Rosmer: Have you the will and the courage—for this, Rebecca?

Rebecca: That you shall see to-morrow—or afterwards—when they find my body.

Rosmer: [*Puts his hand to his forehead.*] There is a horrible fascination in this—!

Rebecca: For I don't want to remain down there. Not longer than necessary. You must see that they find me.

Rosmer: [*Springs up.*] But all this—is nothing but madness. Go—or stay! I will take your bare word this time too.

Rebecca: Phrases, Rosmer! Let us have no more cowardly subterfuges, dear! How can you believe me on my bare word after this day?

Rosmer: I shrink from seeing your defeat, Rebecca!

Rebecca: It will be no defeat.

Rosmer: Yes, it will. You will never bring yourself to go Beata's way.

Rebecca: Do you think not?

Rosmer: Never. You are not like Beata. You are not under the dominion of a distorted view of life.

Rebecca: But I am under the dominion of the Rosmersholm view of life—now. What I have sinned—it is fit that I should expiate.

Rosmer: [*Looks at her fixedly.*] Is that your point of view?

Rebecca: Yes.

Rosmer: [*With resolution.*] Well then, *I* stand firm in our emancipated view of life, Rebecca. There is no judge over us; and therefore we must do justice upon ourselves.

Rebecca: [*Misunderstanding him.*] Yes, that is true—that too. My going away will save what is best in you.

Rosmer: Oh, there is nothing left to save in me.

Rebecca: Yes, there is. But I—after to-day, I should only be a sea-troll dragging down the ship that is to carry you forward. I must go overboard. Why should I remain here in the world, trailing after me my own crippled life? Why brood and brood over the happiness that my past has forfeited for ever? I must give up the game, Rosmer.

Rosmer: If you go—I go with you.

Rebecca: [*Smiles almost imperceptibly, looks at him, and says more softly.*] Yes, come with me—and see—.

Rosmer: I go with you, I say.

Rebecca: To the foot-bridge, yes. You know you never dare go out upon it.

Rosmer: Have you noticed that?

Rebecca: [*Sadly and brokenly.*] Yes.—It was that that made my love hopeless.

Rosmer: Rebecca,—now I lay my hand on your head— [*does so*]—and I wed you as my true wife.

Rebecca: [*Takes both his hands, and bows her head towards his breast.*] Thanks, Rosmer. [*Lets him go.*] And now I will go—gladly.

Rosmer: Man and wife should go together.

Rebecca Only to the bridge, Rosmer.

Rosmer: Out on to it, too. As far as you go—so far shall I go with you. For now I dare.

Rebecca: Are you absolutely certain—that this way is the best for you?

Rosmer: I am certain that it is the only way.

Rebecca: If you were deceiving yourself? If it were only a delusion? One of those white horses of Rosmersholm?

Rosmer: It may be so For we can never escape from them—we of this house.

Rebecca: Then stay, Rosmer!

Rosmer: The husband shall go with his wife, as the wife with her husband.

Rebecca: Yes, but first tell me this: Is it you who follow me? Or is it I who follow you?

Rosmer. We shall never think that question out.

Rebecca: But I should like to know

Rosmer: We go with each other, Rebecca—I with you, and you with me.

Rebecca: I almost think that is the truth.

Rosmer: For now we two are one.

Rebecca: Yes. We are one. Come! We go gladly. [*They go out hand in hand through the hall, and are seen to turn to the left. The door remains open. The room stands empty for a little while. Then the door to the right is opened by Madam Helseth.*]

Madam Helseth: Miss West—the carriage is— [*Looks round.*] Not here? Out together at this time of night? Well—I must say—! H'm! [*Goes out into the hall, looks round, and comes in again.*] Not on the garden seat. Ah, well well. [*Goes to the window and looks out.*] Oh, good God! that white thing there—! My soul! They're both of them out on the bridge! God forgive the sinful creatures—if they're not in each other's arms! [*Shrieks aloud*] Oh—down—both of them! Out into the mill-race! Help! Help! [*Her knees tremble; she holds on to the chair-back, shaking all over; she can scarcely get the words out.*] No. No help here.—The dead wife has taken them.

NOTES ON *ROSMERSHOLM*

I. STRUCTURE AND THEME IN ACT III

As we have seen, in Acts I and II Ibsen is primarily concerned with Rosmer's inner conflict. The first part of Act III stresses further the ironic outcome of the conflict: Rosmer is more sure than ever that he has lost his innocence and therefore cannot go on as emancipator. In other words, Rosmer has not really broken with his traditions—they include a sense of guilt—and the grip of the irrational is still strong upon him.

At this point Ibsen suddenly shifts his attention to Rebecca and makes her the central figure—a complex figure who demands in her own right all of our attention. As we learn how completely she has managed things, we feel almost as if Rosmer were being shunted into a secondary role. Ibsen runs a great risk here: in Act III he actually seems to be starting off another play. It is doubtful, indeed, whether he does successfully handle this problem of structure—a matter which we shall discuss further in Section 6, on Tragedy.

In the meantime, however, we see that the Kroll-Rebecca dialogue does have a certain structural role: it is *parallel with* Act II. There, Rosmer learned about his past; here, Rebecca is reminded of hers. He could not escape his past; nor can the woman who encouraged him to try to do so escape hers. He is bound by the irrational, and so is she: she is worried about her age ("We are made so"), and she retains enough conventional scruples not to wish to be known as an illegitimate child. Thus the symmetry of the two acts is a means of stressing a theme. Ibsen pushes this symmetry still further when he has Kroll make the same shift from principles to expediency that Kroll has revealed in advising Rosmer: the relationship of Rosmer and Rebecca, he says, should be "legalised." Then there is the final impressive parallel: Rosmer renounces his career as emancipator, Rebecca renounces her hold on Rosmer. But whereas Rosmer retreats, Rebecca moves forward: her act, since she wishes to save Rosmer for liberalism, requires high courage and devotion.

2. IRONY IN ACT III

Irony again dominates—irony employed not to produce a mere sense of shock, but as a means of exhibiting the latent realities of a situation which is more complex than it appears on the surface:

1. Rebecca admits to Kroll the hold of the past upon Rosmer (the student should find the lines)—and thus, really, the failure of her whole mission.
2. Since Rebecca is stronger than Rosmer, the recoil of her past upon her is even more bitterly ironic than the corresponding experience of Rosmer's.
3. Kroll's insistence that Rosmer and Rebecca marry again sets up a richly ironic situation: Kroll wants the marriage for the sake of expediency; Rosmer wants it as an answer to his own need; and Rebecca wants the marriage because of her love for Rosmer, but she cannot go on with it because of her own conviction that she loved Rosmer with a guilty love in the past. Her own past thus comes to bear upon her in another way.
4. Seeing failure in every direction, she makes a final heroic gesture: she tries to give back to Rosmer a saving sense of innocence by admitting her own responsibility for Beata's death. But instead of freeing Rosmer she only throws him back into Kroll's arms. By this time we can see an ironic similarity between her renunciation and that made by Beata, which also failed to accomplish its purpose.

Through irony, then, we become aware that the characters have been acting upon false—or at least inadequate—premises. One line of Rebecca's points to the human truth that underlies the failures of Rosmer and Rebecca: "Besides, there are two sorts of will in us I believe" (p. 297b, 44–45).

3. THE STRUCTURE AND IRONY OF ACT IV

The function of Act IV is to push on to a logical and final settlement the complex relationship between Rosmer and Rebecca. Here Ibsen runs

the risk of presenting us with merely an undramatic post-mortem (a risk which Wilde does not wholly escape in his Act IV). But notice how Ibsen (1) makes the act an integral part of the play and (2) gives the act a definite forward movement.

1. Rebecca's confession is really necessary to clarify a matter still obscure—her motives. We have seen her both as an idealist associate of Rosmer and as a not overly scrupulous wielder of power. The conflict between these aspects of her character is resolved by her passion for Rosmer, a passion which helps explain both the selfish and unselfish sides of her. Do we feel at this point that Ibsen has, like a mystery-writer, been unnecessarily withholding a piece of vital information? Probably not: Rebecca would not confess the truth while things seemed to be going well. Her confession is a sign of failure—but at the same time an evidence of the change of character she has undergone.

Again the effect is ironical. Rebecca has not conquered, but is conquered by, the "Rosmer view of life"; Rosmer, if he has influenced no one else, has ennobled her, brought her to *tranquil love;* so there grows upon her the very sense of guilt that had plagued him. Finally, Rosmer assumes her old role, assures her that her "past is dead."

2. But Ibsen still has to deal with Rosmer's conflict. Even while assuring Rebecca that her past is dead, Rosmer shifts back to his problem: how can he regain his sense of innocence, what evidence is there of disinterestedness in Rebecca's love? (The student will find it useful to trace the steps by which this transition to Rosmer's problem is made naturally.) Note how strongly Ibsen conveys to us Rosmer's distrust of Rebecca: we have seen her character unfold just as Rosmer has, exposing one unexpected layer after another. We share his uncertainty of her. In the resolution of that uncertainty lies the forward movement of the play.

The Significance of Brendel. Just as before, Brendel is used to point the way or to suggest a line of action. After seeing him in Act I, Rosmer went on uncompromisingly to make his break with Kroll. In Act IV, Brendel even speaks symbolically (Rebecca must cut off her finger and ear): he points to the need of complete, uncompromising renunciation. The only proof of love is ultimate selflessness.

After an interval of relatively flat conversation, which Ibsen perhaps intended to seem flat in order to suggest temporary inability or unwillingness to act upon Brendel's cue, Rosmer finally suggests that Rebecca's dying, as Beata had died, would finally give substance to her love for him. This is a very daring piece of craftsmanship by Ibsen, for it asks us to accept something which runs counter to all our usual ways of looking at things. We are not used to such absolute action; we do not easily think of the voluntary yielding of life except in great and heroic causes. Two matters are noteworthy, however. Ibsen has in a way prepared us for this by the fact that the whole play is concerned with the devoting of a life to a cause—Rosmer's to emancipation, Rebecca's to Rosmer. Second, we are so aware of Rebecca's interference in Rosmer's life that we feel she owes

him heavy reparation. Further, Ibsen aids our acceptance of the situation by presenting Rebecca as accepting it: this is her formal act of purification, her search for salvation.

Rosmer's Proposal of the Sacrifice. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the way of the reader's acceptance lies in the fact that Rosmer, the potential beneficiary, makes the request. If Rebecca made the suggestion first, or if a third person made it, or if Rosmer were a heroic or Christ-like figure who demanded a sacrifice to something greater than himself, there would be little difficulty. But as it is, the reader may feel that Rosmer seems intolerably self-centered.

Ibsen has, however, obviously attempted to manage the scene so as not to make Rosmer seem incredibly selfish. In the first place, Rosmer has certainly not planned to make any such proposal to Rebecca. Earlier in the scene he says that he has provided for her future; evidently he expects her to survive him. Second, even before making his proposal he is thinking of his own death, as his phrase "whatever may happen" and his statement, "My worthless life lies in my own hands," indicate plainly. Rebecca's exclamation, "What is this? You are never thinking—" shows that she thinks he is hinting at suicide.

Third, the proposal as Rosmer first makes it is *purely hypothetical.* He has learned such a distrust of himself and of her that only the most desperate action can bring him around. Moreover, and this is highly important, Rosmer is really convinced that Rebecca could not *logically* do such a thing; it is the one thing that the "emancipated," perfectly rational view of life would rule out. As he states the case to her, then, he is not so much making a serious suggestion as thinking aloud, commenting on his own desperation: it is impossible for me to regain confidence; I am at an impasse; your view of life makes impossible the one thing—an act like Beata's—that could restore my confidence in you.

He is hesitant even to say so much. His words, "There is a horrible fascination in this—" indicate his recognition that the whole proposal is fantastic and unthinkable. When he says, "Never. You are not Beata. You are not under the dominion of a distorted view of life," he is not taunting her with lack of character; he simply sees her as *belonging to a different school of thought from Beata.*

The student will judge for himself whether this interpretation is sound, or he may decide that it is perhaps what Ibsen ought to have done but did not really succeed in conveying to the reader. But another difficulty comes to the fore in what follows the last speech quoted. Even assuming that the interpretation suggested above is correct, the reader may feel that Rosmer's transition from fanciful hypothesis to serious proposal and acceptance of the sacrifice is entirely too easy.

How has Ibsen meant to present that transition? Rosmer says—Ibsen adds the stage direction "(*With resolution.*)"—"Well, then, I stand firm in our emancipated view of life, Rebecca. There is no judge over us; and therefore we must do justice on ourselves." Ibsen prefaces Rebecca's answer

with the significant stage direction—"*(Misunderstanding him).*" How does she misunderstand him? By taking him to mean that he is going to persist in his emancipation after all, for she goes on to say, "My going away will save what is best in you." But Rosmer, as the rest of the scene reveals, means something quite different. He evidently means: even judged by the new morality of emancipation we—that is, the individual—must do what Beata did. What I am proposing is not a reversion to my old orthodoxy. I stand firm in the emancipated view—and it is from this viewpoint that I am executing judgment on myself.

But, again, this view of the action may claim too much for what is in the text. Ibsen certainly, most readers will agree, has put a heavy burden of interpretation upon the actor and actress who are to play this scene.

One thing is clear, however: when Rosmer does execute judgment on himself, and Rebecca is no longer a solitary victim, some of the early difficulties of the scene disappear. This self-judgment is part of a powerfully ironic conclusion. Rebecca dies by the Rosmersholm tradition—expiation of sin; Rosmer by the "emancipated view." This, ironically, is the *only real application of his modernity.* Then, there is the symbolic marriage just before death: indeed, death is ironically their marriage.

4. THE RELATION OF CHARACTERIZATION TO MEANING

Of the two preceding plays that resembled or aspired to be tragedy, one, *Everyman*, may be said to have a hero, and the other, *The London Merchant*, a "villain" (*The School for Scandal*, a comedy, also has a villain). *Rosmersholm* has neither; in all his major characters Ibsen consistently presents a complex mixture of "good" and "bad." His unwillingness to mould this mixture toward any conventional expectations gives the play maturity, and likewise some difficulty. The complexity of character makes greater demands of us than the relatively simple inner contradictions in Everyman, Barnwell, and Charles Surface. Rebecca's union of noble ends and doubtful means we have already discussed. In Rosmer we see fine idealism mixed with weakness and naïveté. Brendel is an uncompromising liberal of fine insight, whose drunkenness is the equivalent of Rosmer's weakness. Mortensgård stands for a noble cause, perhaps, but his means are less noble than expedient. Kroll, who combines great strength with remarkable understanding of character, tends to be hard, overbearing, and not overscrupulous in his methods of combat.

The inner complexity of the characters points toward complexity of meaning: Ibsen is not taking sides but is endeavoring to present in a lifelike way the multiplicity of forces and demands to which all individuals are subject. Rosmer and Rebecca view life a little too simply in wanting to be "free," to be reasonable, to ennoble men. Absolute freedom is not possible, nor absolute reason; and there are other roads to nobility besides emancipation. It is not that freedom is bad, but that Rosmer and Rebecca misinterpret freedom; their real problem is not to escape from the past but to

use the past constructively in the present. They try to do too much, and so they fail. On the other hand Ibsen does not suggest that reliance on the past—that is, the traditional way of life, as symbolized by Rosmersholm—will of itself lead to perfection and happiness; we hear much of the gloom and oppression at Rosmersholm, and Kroll, though he gains strength and certainty from following a marked-out path, scarcely exhibits an invitingly serene wisdom. But there are no easy choices; the human being always runs into conflicting demands. Here it is well to recall Ibsen's insistence that his business was asking questions, not answering them.

5. LANGUAGE

This complexity of character and meaning is not easily grasped; it may be said, perhaps, that when it is all finished, we still feel a certain unsatisfactoriness about Ibsen's performance. One of the reasons for this is discussed in the following section on Tragedy. But at this point we may suggest that what Ibsen has to say would probably have come across more successfully in poetic form. Poetic language, with its suggestiveness and allusiveness, its taking full advantage of the richness of meanings, is almost essential to the expression of so complex a conception as that of *Rosmersholm*. Here we have several levels of activity in several characters—that which appears on the surface and those which, for whatever reason, are concealed. Poetic language could represent all the levels simultaneously; prose, which is relatively flat and one-dimensional, has to do them one at a time—as in the case of Rebecca, in whom we sense ambiguities almost to the end. We are left to effect our own synthesis, which can never be as satisfactory as the author's own. Ibsen, indeed, is working toward the method of poetry when he uses such a symbol as the foot-bridge and when he has Brendel say, "slice off her incomparably moulded left ear"; he might well have gone further. When we come to the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare, for instance, we can see how fully the poetic language supports and intensifies the dramatic meaning.

6. *ROSMERSHOLM* AS TRAGEDY

Is the play a tragedy? Before we try to answer this question, it may be well to make sure that we agree *whose* play it is. Whose story is it? One is inclined to say that it is Rosmer's. In him the forces of orthodoxy and radicalism, rationality and irrationality, are headed up. It is over him that the others contend. Yet if it is his story, one must conclude that the play is hardly a tragedy. Rosmer is too weak to be a tragic hero. The difficulty is not that he lacks violence or has little picturesqueness. These qualities are not necessary in a tragic hero. The tragic protagonist can be a quiet man; in appearance, even an unprepossessing man. But strength *is* necessary. The tragic protagonist must put up a struggle, but Rosmer struggles

only feebly. He is foredoomed to give in; the collapse of his program, foreshadowed early in the play, is complete by the end of Act III. The decisive actions are taken without his knowledge, and as soon as he hears what they are, he gives up. As he says to Rebecca in Act IV, "Assuredly you were the strongest at Rosmersholm. Stronger than Beata and I together."

Rosmer is right. It is Rebecca who decided to free Rosmer, who pushed Beata to suicide, who encouraged Rosmer to declare his emancipation. One can make a case for the play's being her tragedy. Rosmer's case is pathetic rather than tragic: he is the man whose fate is determined by forces of which his will is not one. He tends to be—in Aristotle's terms—the good man who suffers and who cannot therefore be the tragic protagonist. Rebecca, on the other hand, is not extraordinarily good or bad. She represents a mixture, and she has humanity, pluck, and daring. Yet there are difficulties in the way of considering her the tragic protagonist.

First, the author has hardly focused the play on her. In Acts I and II she plays a decidedly secondary role; she dominates most of Act III but only part of IV. That the play might be hers comes to the reader almost as an afterthought. The author has not had us live with her through the process of thought and emotion by which she reaches the decision to interfere with the lives of the Rosmers, or to visualize dramatically the effect upon her when she realizes that, because Beata has drowned herself, she has been successful. Her confession scene is dramatic enough, but then we see the earlier act as a *fait accompli*. She is now a different woman.

Second, if we argue that the great dramatic decision of the play is not Rebecca's decision to destroy Beata but rather Rebecca's deciding to free Rosmer finally from Beata by showing him that she can die for his good as well as Beata, and if we argue that we do participate imaginatively in the decisive act, which is indeed enacted before our eyes, it would have to be answered that, although the act is dramatic, Rebecca has now become Aristotle's "good man." Her act is entirely sacrificial; the struggle is over.

This is not to say that the end is ineffective or devoid of tragic elements. The fact that the struggle is internal, and that the conflict is between basic elements in human experience, certainly brings the play close to tragedy. It is obviously much better than *Barnwell*, yet if we compare it with *Lear* or *Oedipus* we shall have to say that it falls short of the tragic quality of these plays. Treated from the beginning as Rebecca's tragedy, it might have reached a high level. Certainly, it has the essential ingredients: Rebecca [illegible] ks on a [illegible] forces [illegible] n him from them only by complying with them and suffering from the same death into which she had forced Beata.

Why has Ibsen not worked it out in this way? In other words, why has he spent so much time on Rosmer? At this we can only conjecture. But it is worth noting that Rosmer is more closely related to the village situation than Rebecca, and the village situation suggests the "problem play" which,

though he protest against it, Ibsen tends to write. Perhaps it is not too fantastic to suggest that he began the play at the problem level where he would be likely to deal with purely transitory problems—and then gradually, but a little bit too late, found himself shifting over to the tragic implication of his materials.

7. *ROSMERSHOLM* AS PROBLEM PLAY

The situation which we have suggested in the preceding paragraph is one which we do often find in modern drama: the preoccupation of the dramatist with a problem—such as prohibition, or race relations, or politics—often ties him to a temporary situation, the passing of which exhausts the meaning of the play.

All tragedy involves problems, of course. But the playwright who is primarily concerned with the solution of the problem, or who may even hope to assist in a certain kind of solution, is likely to miss the universal issues involved in the problem—the issues which he must find if the play is to be of perennial value. The danger is particularly great if, in his desire to move the public to *do something* about a problem (lynching, political corruption, cruelty of employers), the playwright presents his protagonist as a victim of circumstances beyond his control. This is to strike at the roots of tragedy by cutting the protagonist off from any meaningful struggle. He is not responsible for his downfall; he is not involved in guilt, as the tragic protagonist to a degree always is. Our emotions are rather simple: righteous anger against the circumstances, the environment, the state of affairs, whatever is responsible for the protagonist's sufferings. Such a concentration of emotions is logical if all the author wants to do is arouse resentment at certain conditions. But this method leads away from tragedy.

Since "problem plays" and tragedies are both concerned with problems, the crucial issue is what the author does with the character in treating the problem. If he regards the problem as providing merely a setting for the investigation of the complexities of character—and even the most topical issue can be so treated—he is on the road to tragedy. If he takes the goodness and badness of his characters for granted, he is going to secure much less profound effects. The choice is up to the author: What treatment will choose to make? Shakespeare, for instance might easily have made *Hamlet* into a rather trashy problem play if he had been dealing merely with the problem of preventing the usurpation of thrones.

Rosmersholm, we have suggested, falls short of tragedy. But we owe it to Ibsen to make clear that he has gone a long way beyond the mere problem—whether the conservatives or liberals shall determine the life of the community—and, by his concern with problems of character, has approached tragedy. He is concerned with moral rather than social problems: Rebecca, at least, has a certain freedom of will; both leading characters are responsible. Ibsen's plays do not always work out in this way. Shaw's, likewise, tend to become mere problem plays. And many modern plays, including

O'Neill's serious plays, are too much like mere clinical studies in environment or psychology.

We have no right, of course, to demand that every play be a tragedy—either in intention or in fact. We have to be grateful for the sensitive and intelligent play wherever we are so fortunate as to find it. We should be the poorer for the loss of such plays. We need not cease to enjoy them, though we acquire a finer discrimination of the nature of tragedy. Yet the fact that our age rarely produces tragedy, in spite of its evident dramatic talent, may tell us something about the nature of our age and of ourselves.

8. THE UNITIES

The action of the play all occurs on the last three days of the lives of Rosmer and Rebecca; all of it occurs at Rosmersholm—three acts in one room. That this is not an artificial limitation of time and place simply for the sake of adhering to the "unities" is apparent from our not feeling that [illegible]

The compactness of his play, then, is clearly the result, not of an artificial and inflexible theory of time and place, but of the way in which Ibsen conceives of his problem. This play—as well as others by Ibsen—[illegible] concerned only with the [illegible] may have roots and rami- [illegible] earlier developments, of course, may have to be recalled in some detail and by one device or another introduced into the play (note with what skill past events are introduced in *Rosmersholm;* the play is never held up to permit exposition), but the direct presentation of them is outside the scope of the play. The play itself deals only with the climactic moment; hence the "unity of time" and the "unity of place," instead of having some intrinsic value, actually derive from the unity of the action—that is from its brevity, compactness, singleness. Indeed, Ibsen's management of these problems represents a very interesting application of the principles set forth in Part One, under "Problems of Scope," which it may be useful to review briefly (pp. 27–29).

QUESTIONS ON *ROSMERSHOLM*

1. What ironic effect does Ibsen secure in the short scene between Madam Helseth and Rebecca at the beginning of Act IV? Does Madam Helseth's thinking in any way resemble Kroll's? Does Madam Helseth's attitude to Rebecca in any way influence our own? Consider the final scene in Act III.

2. Brendel's speeches are often characterized by sardonic wit. Does this style seem appropriate to his character?

3. Does the Brendel scene accomplish anything else besides indicating a line of action for Rebecca and Rosmer? What do we learn from Brendel's references to Mortensgård?

4. Does Rosmer's statement to Rebecca, "Ah no, we cannot be ennobled from without" amplify the meaning of the play in any way?

5. What is the dramatic value of Rebecca's lines, "Then how will you be able to live your life?" and "Let us hold fast to it, Rosmer.—We shall leave it soon enough"?

6. What is ironic about Rosmer's telling Rebecca he has arranged for her "future"? Does this remark in any way suggest Madam Helseth?

7. Work out fully the meaning of the foot-bridge as it appears in the dialogue near the end of Act IV (p. 306a, 20 ff.). What was it that made Rebecca's love "hopeless"? Why does Rosmer feel that he can wed Rebecca at this point? Consider also the use made of the foot-bridge later.

8. What is the final use made of the white horses?

9. For a good deal of the play Rebecca regards Rosmer's sense of sin as an evil effect of tradition. Does Ibsen appear to intend this as an attack on traditionalism?

10. What additional meaning is suggested by the fact that Rebecca once "bewitched" Kroll?

11. We have discussed the complexity of the characters rather fully. In the light of all we have seen of Kroll, what should be made of the references, in Act I (p. 264b, 14–16 and p. 266a, 7–8), to his having been a very "moral" head of a college debating society and his being, now, president of the Temperance Society?

12. How are we to interpret Rebecca's remark, ". . . Rosmersholm has sapped my strength"? Can we recognize a universal human experience here? If so, what?

13. We have suggested that by poetic language Ibsen could gain a more full and precise statement of the complexities which he discerns. Note, for instance, the series of statements in which Rebecca tells Rosmer that Rosmersholm has "enslaved" her, has "ennobled" her mind, but killed her "happiness." Now here is a series of bold statements which appear flatly contradictory. Take just the latter two; to be ennobled cannot in any real sense lead to unhappiness. Does Ibsen mean that she is so evil a character that nobility actually makes her unhappy? Hardly that. What does he mean then? That she is experiencing several feelings at once—perhaps a more tranquil, more refined sense of the good life, plus a real sense of loss at the disappearance of an earlier zestful combativeness? But at best this is an awkward synthesis: metaphor could so fuse these meanings that we could have awareness of conflict without sense of contradiction. What is the problem raised by the use of the word *enslaved* in the next context?

14. The play depends to some extent, as we have seen, upon the clash between Rosmer's ideals and "the way of the world"—a theme also used by Congreve in *The Way of the World.* Notice that the same theme appears in *Lady Windermere's Fan:* there Mrs. Erlynne runs counter to the "way." In a sense, too, we may say that the "way of the world" has a certain influence in *Everyman.* Can you, by examining the plays, determine the

various roles played by the "way of the world"? Whether one kind of treatment or another leads to comedy or tragedy?

15. In Act II Rebecca eavesdrops upon the Rosmer-Kroll conversation. Thus we have another "screen scene." How does it compare with those in the plays by Wilde and Sheridan? Does it have as important an influence upon the action?

16. Compare Rebecca's "farewell" scene early in Act IV with Millwood's "farewell" scene in Act II. xi of *The London Merchant*. What similarities are there? What essential differences?

17. We have stressed the ironies in the last lines and actions of Rosmer and Rebecca. Could you argue that at the end Rosmer again, ironically, becomes a pastor? What act of his sugggests this interpretation?

SUGGESTED READING

Euripides' *Alcestis* is another play which has, as a central part of the action, the voluntary death of a woman to save a man. In the Greek play, a queen dies in place of her husband, who had been called upon to die. Euripides, however, treats the material rather differently from Ibsen. Study his play and account for the difference in effect. And, while studying *Alcestis*, you may wish to compare the attitude to the summons of death in that play with the attitude shown in *Everyman*.

4. Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, *Part One*

HENRY IV, PART ONE (1596–97), has long been admired because of the presence in it of the character of Falstaff, who was a great favorite in Elizabethan times and who has since then come to be regarded as one of the great comic characters of all time. He has been compared with Don Quixote, and, on the level of imaginative insight, even with a great tragic character—Hamlet. He is certainly one of the greatest creations of Shakespeare's imagination. *Henry IV*, *Part One* is, of the several plays in which Falstaff appears, that one in which Falstaff is at his best, and, in the opinion of many readers, in which he is most truly and characteristically himself.

One view of the play, indeed, is that it is rather stodgy history redeemed only by Falstaff and the tavern scenes. Another view would argue for the brilliance of the central portraits of Prince Hal and of Hotspur and would tend to see the presence of Falstaff as destroying the unity of the play. The material of the play, it is true, is exceedingly diverse, and it is possible, of course, that the student may conclude after even a careful reading that the play lacks any real unity.

Still, it will not do for us to begin by assuming that this is so. There is abundant evidence that Shakespeare strove here as elsewhere for a total unity. The play will be more interesting—and, as a matter of fact, the character of Falstaff himself will seem the more brilliant—if we are able to see how he fits into the play as a whole than if we take him merely as a brilliant excrescence on the play, to be enjoyed for his own sake.

In this connection, the student should be aware of the detail of the poetry and particularly of Falstaff's witty "prose poetry." The latter is rewarding even if detached from the context. But, on careful examination, it may come to suggest deeper implications: it may suggest a kind of commentary on the world of the play, and thus indicate the positive function which the character of Falstaff has in the play; it may help us see more clearly what is the attitude of Shakespeare toward the characters and events of the play and the attitude toward them which he expects us as readers to adopt. Least of all with Shakespeare are we justified in thinking of the poetry as a kind of external decoration, applied to the surface of the play. The poetry is an integral part of the play itself; and this generalization applies in full measure to Falstaff's witty sallies and asides.

THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY THE FOURTH

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

King Henry the Fourth
Henry, Prince of Wales } sons to the King
John of Lancaster }
Earl of Westmoreland
Sir Walter Blunt
Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester
Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland
Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur, his son
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March
Richard Scroop, Archbishop of York
Archibald, Earl of Douglas
Owen Glendower
Sir Richard Vernon
Sir John Falstaff
Sir Michael, a friend to the Archbishop of York
Poins
Gadshill
Peto
Bardolph
Lady Percy, wife to Hotspur, and sister to Mortimer
Lady Mortimer, daughter to Glendower, and wife to Mortimer
Mistress Quickly, hostess of a tavern in Eastcheap

Lords, Officers, Sheriff, Vintner, Chamberlain, Drawers, two Carriers, Travellers, and Attendants

SCENE—England

[*Time of action*—Thirteen months—from the defeat of Mortimer by Glendower June 22, 1402, to the battle of Shrewsbury, July 21, 1403.]

ACT I

[Scene I—London. The palace.]

[*Enter King Henry, Lord John of Lancaster, the Earl of Westmoreland, Sir Walter Blunt, and others.*]

King: So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant,
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
To be commenced in stronds afar remote
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood;
No more shall trenching war channel her fields,
Nor bruise her flowerets with the armed hoofs
Of hostile paces: those opposed eyes,[1]
Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven,
All of one nature, of one substance bred,
Did lately meet in the intestine shock
And furious close of civil butchery
Shall now, in mutual well-beseeming ranks,
March all one way and be no more opposed
Against acquaintance, kindred and allies[2]:
The edge of war, like an ill-sheathed knife,
No more shall cut his master. Therefore, friends,
As far as to the sepulchre of Christ,
Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross
We are impressed and engaged to fight,
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy;
Whose arms were moulded in their mother's womb
To chase these pagans in those holy fields
Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
For our advantage on the bitter cross.
But this our purpose now is twelve month old,
And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go:
Therefore we meet not now. Then let me hear
[illegible]
in question,
And many limits of the charge set down
But yesternight: when all athwart there came
A post from Wales loaden with heavy news;
Whose worst was, that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butchered;
Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,
Such beastly shameless transformation,
By whose Welshwomen done as may not be
Without much shame retold or spoken of.

King It seems then that the tidings of this broil
Brake off our business for the Holy Land

West This match'd with other did, my gracious lord;
For more uneven and unwelcome news
Came from the north and thus it did import.
On Holy-rood day, the gallant Hotspur there,

[1] The eyes of the opposing forces [2] A reference to the civil wars which resulted in the deposing of Richard II and the crowning of Henry IV in his place.

[3] Enterprise, especially an enterprise which requires haste

Young Harry Percy and brave Archibald,
That ever-valiant and approved Scot,
At Holmedon met,
Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour;
As by discharge of their artillery,
And shape of likelihood, the news was told;
For he that brought them, in the very heat
And pride of their contention did take horse,
Uncertain of the issue any way.

King: Here is a dear, a true industrious friend,
Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse,
Stain'd with the variation of each soil
Betwixt that Holmedon and this seat of ours;
And he hath brought us smooth and welcome news.
The Earl of Douglas is discomfited:
Ten thousand bold Scots, two and twenty knights,
Balk'd [4] in their own blood did Sir Walter see
On Holmedon's plains. Of prisoners, Hotspur took
Mordake the Earl of Fife, and eldest son
To beaten Douglas; and the Earl of Athol,
Of Murray, Angus, and Menteith:
And is not this an honourable spoil?
A gallant prize? ha, cousin, is it not?

West.: In faith,
It is a conquest for a prince to boast of.

King: Yea, there [5] thou makest me sad and makest me sin
In envy that my Lord Northumberland
Should be the father to so blest a son,
A son who is the theme of honour's tongue;
Amongst a grove, the very straightest plant;
Who is sweet Fortune's minion [6] and her pride:
Whilst I, by looking on the praise of him,
See riot and dishonour stain the brow
Of my young Harry. O that it could be proved
That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.
But let him from my thoughts. What think you, coz,
Of this young Percy's pride? the prisoners,
Which he in this adventure hath surprised,
To his own use he keeps; and sends me word,
I shall have none but Mordake Earl of Fife.

West.: This is his uncle's teaching: this is Worcester,
Malevolent to you in all aspects;
Which makes him prune himself, and bristle up
The crest of youth against your dignity.

King: But I have sent for him to answer this;
And for this cause awhile we must neglect
Our holy purpose to Jerusalem.
Cousin, on Wednesday next our council we
Will hold at Windsor; so inform the lords;
But come yourself with speed to us again;
For more is to be said and to be done
Than out of anger can be uttered.

West.: I will, my liege. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE II—London. An apartment of the Prince's.]

[*Enter the Prince of Wales and Falstaff.*]

Fal.: Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?

Prince: Thou art so fat-witted, with

[4] Heaped up in balks or ridges. [5] At the mention of *prince*. [6] Favorite, darling.

drinking of old sack and unbuttoning thee after supper and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack and minutes capons and clocks the tongues of bawds and dials the signs of leaping-houses and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day.

Fal.: Indeed, you come near me now, Hal; for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phœbus, he, "that wandering knight so fair." And, I prithee, sweet wag, when thou art king, as, God save thy grace,—majesty I should say, for grace thou wilt have none,—

Prince: What, none?

Fal.: No, by my troth, not so much as will serve to be prologue to an egg and butter.[1]

Prince: Well, how then? come, roundly, roundly.

Fal.: Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty[2]: let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon; and let men say we be men of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.

Prince: Thou sayest well, and it holds well too; for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed, as the sea is, by the moon. As, for proof, now: a purse of gold most resolutely snatched on Monday night and most dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning; got with swearing "Lay by" and spent with crying "Bring in"; now in a slow an ebb as the foot of the ladder[3] and by and by in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows.

Fal.: By the Lord, thou sayest true, lad. And is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?

Prince: As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle. And is not a buff jerkin[4] a most sweet robe of durance[5]?

Fal.: How now, how now, mad wag! what, in thy quips and thy quiddities? what a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?

Prince: Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?

Fal.: Well, thou hast called her to a reckoning many a time and oft.

Prince: Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

Fal.: No; I'll give thee thy due, thou hast paid all there.

Prince: Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch, and where it would not, I have used my credit.

Fal.: Yea, and so used it that, were it not here apparent that thou art heir apparent[5]—But, I prithee, sweet wag, [illegible]

[illegible]

of old father antic[6] the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

Prince: No, thou shalt.

Fal.: Shall I? O rare! By the Lord, I'll be a brave judge.

Prince: Thou judgest false already: I [illegible]

[illegible]

it jumps with my humour as well as waiting in the court, I can tell you.

Prince: For obtaining of suits?

Fal.: Yea, for obtaining of suits,[7]

[1] Grace said before a meager, Lenten breakfast. [2] "Squires of the night's body" may be a euphemism for highwaymen; "thieves of the day's beauty," for loafers.

[3] By which the criminal ascended the gallows. [4] A leather jacket which would "endure" well but was also worn by prisoners in "duress vile." [5] Probably so pronounced as to yield a play on "here apparent." [6] Mountebank, buffoon. [7] Suits as favors granted to a courtier and as suits of clothes.

whereof the hangman hath no lean wardrobe. 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugged bear.[8]

Prince: Or an old lion, or a lover's lute.

Fal.: Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe. 101

Prince: What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of Moor-ditch?

Fal.: Thou hast the most unsavoury similes and art indeed the most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young prince. But, Hal, I prithee, trouble me no more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought. An old lord of the council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I marked him not; and yet he talked very wisely, but I regarded him not; and yet he walked wisely, and in the street too.

Prince: Thou didst well; for wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it. 118

Fal.: O, thou hast damnable iteration and art indeed able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal; God forgive thee for it! Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing; and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over: by the Lord, an I do not, I am a villain; I'll be damned for never a king's son in Christendom.

Prince: Where shall we take a purse to-morrow, Jack? 131

Fal.: 'Zounds, where thou wilt, lad; I'll make one; an I do not, call me villain and baffle me.

Prince: I see a good amendment of life in thee; from praying to purse-taking. 137

Fal.: Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal; 'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation. [*Enter Poins.*] Poins! Now shall we know if Gadshill have set a match. O, if men were to be saved by merit, what hole in hell were hot enough for him? This is the most omnipotent villain that ever cried "Stand" to a true man.[9] 146

Prince: Good morrow, Ned.

Poins: Good morrow, sweet Hal. What says Monsieur Remorse? what says Sir John Sack and Sugar? Jack! how agrees the devil and thee about thy soul, that thou soldest him on Good-Friday last for a cup of Madeira and a cold capon's leg? 154

Prince: Sir John stands to his word, the devil shall have his bargain; for he was never yet a breaker of proverbs: he will give the devil his due.

Poins: Then art thou damned for keeping thy word with the devil. 160

Prince: Else he had been damned for cozening[10] the devil.

Poins: But, my lads, my lads, to-morrow morning, by four o'clock, early at Gadshill! there are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses: I have vizards[11] for you all; you have horses for yourselves: Gadshill lies to-night in Rochester: I have bespoke supper to-morrow night in Eastcheap: we may do it as secure as sleep. If you will go, I will stuff your purses full of crowns; if you will not, tarry at home and be hanged. 175

Fal.: Hear ye, Yedward; if I tarry at home and go not, I'll hang you for going.

Poins: You will, chops?[12]

Fal.: Hal, wilt thou make one? 180

Prince: Who, I rob? I a thief? not I, by my faith.

Fal.: There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee, nor thou camest not of the blood royal,[13] if thou darest not stand for ten shillings.

Prince: Well then, once in my days I'll be a madcap.

Fal.: Why, that's well said.

Prince: Well, come what will, I'll tarry at home. 191

[8] A baited bear.

[9] "Halt" to an honest man. [10] Cheating. [11] Masks. [12] Chubby cheeks. [13] A royal was also a coin worth ten shillings.

Fal.: By the Lord, I'll be a traitor then, when thou art king.

Prince: I care not.

Poins: Sir John, I prithee, leave the prince and me alone: I will lay him down such reasons for this adventure that he shall go. 198

Fal.: Well, God give thee the spirit of persuasion and him the ears of profiting, that what thou speakest may move and what he hears may be believed, that the *true prince may, for recreation sake,* prove a false thief; for the poor abuses of the time want countenance. Farewell: you shall find me in Eastcheap.

Prince: Farewell, the latter spring! farewell, All-hallown summer! [*Exit Falstaff.*] 209

Poins: Now, my good sweet honey lord, ride with us to-morrow: I have a jest to execute that I cannot manage *alone Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto, and* Gadshill shall rob those men that we have already waylaid, yourself and I will not be there; and when they have the booty, if you and I do not rob them, cut this head off from my shoulders. 218

Prince: How shall we part with them in setting forth?

Poins: Why, we will set forth before or after them, and appoint them a place of meeting, wherein it is at our pleasure to fail, and then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves, which they shall have no sooner achieved, but we'll set upon them. 227

Prince: Yea, but 'tis like that they will know us by our horses, by our habits, and by every other appointment, to be ourselves. 231

Poins: Tut! our horses they shall not see; I'll tie them in the wood; our vizards we will change after we leave them: and, sirrah, I have cases of buckram for the nonce, to immask our noted outward garments 237

Prince: Yea, but I doubt they will be too hard for us. 239

Poins: Well, for two of them, I know them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turned back; and for the third, if he fight longer than he sees reason, I'll forswear arms. The virtue of this jest will be, the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we [illegible] reproof of this lies the jest. 250

Prince: Well, I'll go with thee: provide us all things necessary and meet *me to-morrow night in Eastcheap; there* I'll sup Farewell.

Poins: Farewell, my lord. [*Exit.*]

Prince: I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness:
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world, 260
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come, 267
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes [11],
[illegible]
more eyes 275
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will [*Exit.*]

[11] Deceive men's expectations.

[SCENE III—London. The palace.]

[*Enter the King, Northumberland, Worcester, Hotspur, Sir Walter Blunt, with others.*]

King: My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
Unapt to stir at these indignities,
And you have found me[1]; for accordingly
You tread upon my patience: but be sure
I will from henceforth rather be myself,
Mighty and to be fear'd, than my condition[2];
Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down,
And therefore lost that title of respect
Which the proud soul ne'er pays but to the proud.

Wor.: Our house, my sovereign liege, little deserves
The scourge of greatness to be used on it;
And that same greatness too which our own hands
Have holp to make so portly.[3]

North.: My lord,—

King: Worcester, get thee gone; for I do see
Danger and disobedience in thine eye:
O, sir, your presence is too bold and peremptory,
And majesty might never yet endure
The moody frontier of a servant brow.
You have good leave to leave us: when we need
Your use and counsel, we shall send for you. [*Exit Wor.*]
You were about to speak. [*To North.*]

North.: Yea, my good lord.
Those prisoners in your highness' name demanded,
Which Harry Percy here at Holmedon took,
Were, as he says, not with such strength denied
As is deliver'd to your majesty:
Either envy, therefore, or misprision
Is guilty of this fault and not my son.

Hot.: My liege, I did deny no prisoners.
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, and trimly dress'd,
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home;
He was perfumed like a milliner;
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet-box,[4] which ever and anon
He gave his nose and took 't away again;
Who therewith angry, when it next came there,
Took it in snuff[5]; and still he smiled and talk'd,
And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He question'd me; amongst the rest, demanded
My prisoners in your majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
To be so pester'd with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answer'd neglectingly I know not what,
He should, or he should not; for he made me mad
To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
Of guns and drums and wounds,—God save the mark!—
And telling me the sovereign'st thing on earth

[1] Found me out. [2] Follow my natural temper. [3] Majestic.

[4] Perfume box. [5] A play upon "snuffed it up" and "became angry."

Was parmaceti for an inward bruise;
And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villainous salt-petre should be digg'd
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
So cowardly; and but for these vile guns,
He would himself have been a soldier.
This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,
I answer'd indirectly, as I said;
And I beseech you, let not his report
Come current for an accusation
Betwixt my love and your high majesty.

Blunt: The circumstance consider'd, good my lord,
Whate'er Lord Harry Percy then had said·
To such a person and in such a place,
At such a time, with all the rest retold,
May reasonably die and never rise
To do him wrong or any way impeach
What then he said, so he unsay it now.

King: Why, yet he doth deny his prisoners,
But with proviso and exception,[4]
That we at our own charge shall ransom straight
His brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer,
Who, on my soul, hath wilfully betray'd
The lives of those that he did lead to fight
Against that great magician, damn'd Glendower,
Whose daughter, as we hear, the Earl of March
Hath lately married. Shall our coffers, then,
Be emptied to redeem a traitor home?
Shall we buy treason? and indent with fears,
When they have lost and forfeited themselves?
No, on the barren mountains let him starve,
For I shall never hold that man my friend
Whose tongue shall ask me for one penny cost
To ransom home revolted Mortimer.

Hot.: Revolted Mortimer!
He never did fall off, my sovereign liege,
But by the chance of war: to prove that true
Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds,
Those mouthed wounds, which valiantly he took,
When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition, hand to hand,
He did confound[5] the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendower:
Three times they breathed and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank
Bloodstained with these valiant combatants.
Never did base and rotten policy
Colour her working with such deadly wounds;
Nor never could the noble Mortimer
Receive so many, and all willingly:
Then let not him be slander'd with revolt.

King: Thou dost belie him, Percy, thou dost belie him;
He never did encounter with Glendower:
I tell thee,
He durst as well have met the devil alone
As Owen Glendower for an enemy.
Art thou not ashamed? But, sirrah, henceforth
Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer:
Send me your prisoners with the speediest means,
Or you shall hear in such a kind from me

[4] Except with reservations.

[5] Spend.

As will displease you. My Lord Northumberland,
We license your departure with your son.
Send us your prisoners, or you will hear of it.
[*Exeunt King Henry, Blunt, and train.*]
Hot.: An if the devil come and roar for them,
I will not send them: I will after straight
And tell him so; for I will ease my heart,
Albeit I make a hazard of my head.
North.: What, drunk with choler? stay and pause awhile:
Here comes your uncle.
[*Re-enter Worcester.*]
Hot.: Speak of Mortimer!
'Zounds, I will speak of him; and let my soul
Want mercy, if I do not join with him:
Yea, on his part I'll empty all these veins,
And shed my dear blood drop by drop in the dust,
But I will lift the down-trod Mortimer
As high in the air as this unthankful king,
As this ingrate and canker'd Bolingbroke.
North.: Brother, the king hath made your nephew mad.
Wor.: Who struck this heat up after I was gone?
Hot.: He will, forsooth, have all my prisoners;
And when I urged the ransom once again
Of my wife's brother, then his cheek look'd pale,
And on my face he turn'd an eye of death,[8]
Trembling even at the name of Mortimer.
Wor.: I cannot blame him: was not he proclaim'd
By Richard that dead is the next of blood?
North.: He was; I heard the proclamation:
And then it was when the unhappy king,—
Whose wrongs in us God pardon!—did set forth
Upon his Irish expedition;
From whence he intercepted did return
To be deposed and shortly murdered.
Wor.: And for whose death we in the world's wide mouth
Live scandalized and foully spoken of.
Hot.: But, soft, I pray you; did King Richard then
Proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer
Heir to the crown?
North.: He did; myself did hear it.
Hot.: Nay, then I cannot blame his cousin king
That wish'd him on the barren mountains starve.
But shall it be, that you, that set the crown
Upon the head of this forgetful man
And for his sake wear the detested blot
Of murderous subornation, shall it be,
That you a world of curses undergo,
Being the agents, or base second means,
The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather?
O, pardon me that I descend so low,
To show the line and the predicament[9]
Wherein you range under this subtle king;
Shall it for shame be spoken in these days,
Or fill up chronicles in time to come,
That men of your nobility and power
Did gage[10] them both in an unjust behalf,
As both of you—God pardon it!—have done,
To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,
And plant this thorn, this canker,[11] Bolingbroke?
And shall it in more shame be further spoken,
That you are fool'd, discarded and shook off

[8] Eye threatening death.

[9] Category. [10] Pledge. [11] Wild rose.

By him for whom these shames ye underwent?
No; yet time serves wherein ye may redeem
Your banish'd honours and restore yourselves
Into the good thoughts of the world again,
Revenge the jeering and disdain'd contempt
Of this proud king, who studies day and night
To answer [illegible] all the debt he owes to you
Even with the bloody payment of your deaths:
Therefore, I say,—

Wor. Peace, cousin, say no more:
And now I will unclasp a secret book,
And to your quick-conceiving discontents
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,
As full of peril and adventurous spirit
As to o'er-walk a current roaring loud
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

Hots. If he fall in, good-night! or sink or swim:
Send danger from the east unto the west,
So honour cross it from the north to south,
And let them grapple: O, the blood more stirs
To rouse a lion than to start a hare!

North. Imagination of some great exploit
Drives him beyond the bounds of patience.

Hots. By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks;
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
Without corrival all her dignities:
But out upon this half-faced fellowship!

Wor. He apprehends a world of figures [illegible] here,
But not the form of what he should attend.
Good cousin, give me audience for a while.

Hots. I cry you mercy.

Wor. Those same noble Scots
That I have prisoners,—

Hots. I'll keep them all;
By God, he shall not have a Scot of them;
No, if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not:
I'll keep them, by this hand.

Wor. You start away
And lend no ear unto my purposes.
Those prisoners you shall keep.

Hots. Nay, I will; that's flat.
He said he would not ransom Mortimer;
Forbad my tongue to speak of Mortimer;
But I will find him when he lies asleep,
And in his ear I'll holla "Mortimer!"
Nay,
I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
Nothing but "Mortimer," and give it him,
To keep his anger still in motion.

Wor. Hear you, cousin, a word.

Hots. All studies here I solemnly defy,
Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke.
And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales,
But that I think his father loves him [illegible]
And would be glad he met with some mischance,
I would have him poison'd with a pot of ale.

Wor. Farewell, kinsman: I'll talk to you
When you are better temper'd to attend.

[illegible] Pay.

[illegible] Fancies

North.: Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool
Art thou to break into this woman's mood,
Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!
Hot.: Why, look you, I am whipp'd and scourged with rods,
Nettled and stung with pismires, when I hear
Of this vile politician, Bolingbroke.
In Richard's time,—what do you call the place?—
A plague upon it, it is in Gloucestershire;
'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept,
His uncle York; where I first bow'd my knee
Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke,—
'Sblood!—
When you and he came back from Ravenspurgh.
North.: At Berkley castle.
Hot.: You say true:
Why, what a candy deal of courtesy
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!
Look, "when his infant fortune came to age,"
And "gentle Harry Percy," and "kind cousin";
O, the devil take such cozeners! God forgive me!
Good uncle, tell your tale; I have done.
Wor.: Nay, if you have not, to it again;
We will stay your leisure.
Hot.: I have done, i' faith.
Wor.: Then once more to your Scottish prisoners.
Deliver them up without their ransom straight,
And make the Douglas' son your only mean
For powers in Scotland; which, for divers reasons
Which I shall send you written, be assured,
Will easily be granted. You, my lord, [*To Northumberland.*]
Your son in Scotland being thus employ'd,
Shall secretly into the bosom creep
Of that same noble prelate, well beloved,
The archbishop,
Hot.: Of York, is it not?
Wor.: True; who bears hard
His brother's death at Bristol, the Lord Scroop.
I speak not this in estimation,[14]
As what I think might be, but what I know
Is ruminated, plotted and set down,
And only stays but to behold the face
Of that occasion that shall bring it on.
Hot.: I smell it: upon my life, it will do well.
North.: Before the game is afoot, thou still let'st slip.
Hot.: Why, it cannot choose but be a noble plot:
And then the power of Scotland and of York,
To join with Mortimer, ha?
Wor.: And so they shall.
Hot.: In faith, it is exceedingly well aim'd.
Wor.: And 'tis no little reason bids us speed,
To save our heads by raising of a head;
For, bear ourselves as even as we can,
The king will always think him in our debt,
And think we think ourselves unsatisfied,
Till he hath found a time to pay us home:
And see already how he doth begin
To make us strangers to his looks of love.
Hot.: He does, he does: we'll be revenged on him.
Wor.: Cousin, farewell: no further go in this
Than I by letters shall direct your course.

[14] Conjecturally.

When time is ripe, which will be suddenly,
I'll steal to Glendower and Lord Mortimer;
Where you and Douglas and our powers at once,
As I will fashion it, shall happily meet,
To bear our fortunes in our own strong arms,
Which now we hold at much uncertainty.

North.: Farewell, good brother: we shall thrive, I trust.

Hot.: Uncle, adieu: O, let the hours be short
Till fields and blows and groans applaud our sport. [*Exeunt.*]

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON ACT I

The first act of this play, like the first act of most other plays, must be devoted to exposition and the introduction of characters. The historical material with which Shakespeare works in this play (and in other "history" plays) is usually regarded as relatively intractable material—difficult for the dramatist to reduce to dramatic form and unity. This fact, plus the fact that the play treats a relatively large body of characters, may seem to render Shakespeare's problem almost insoluble. And indeed, at a first glance the play does seem lacking in fundamental unity, and the first act, in particular, confused and confusing. We meet many people—and very diverse people at that; and their concerns do not appear to have any fundamental relation to each other.

Yet a closer observation will indicate that the act is a sort of minor triumph of exposition. We do meet many people, but the scenes which introduce them reveal them in characteristic activity. There is the king, burdened with affairs of state, wearing his crown with something of an uneasy conscience, hoping to redeem the way in which he gained his power by going on a crusade, yet prevented now once more by rebellions and rumors of rebellion. There is Prince Hal, roistering with his tavern companions, indulging, indeed, in the very activities which cause sorrow to the king and which seem a judgment on his own life: that is, the king is ironically rebuked by Providence, for the crown, which he has gained with difficulty and by violent means, is to be passed on to a son who is not in the least kingly. In the last place, there is Percy ("Hotspur," as he is called), whose indignation at his rebuff by the king throws him into the mood of outraged pride out of which the new rebellion against the king will grow. He exhibits at once the chivalrous fire which produces envy in the king that his own son is not more like him, but which, on another level, and because he is *not* the king's son, will cause the king future anxieties.

The three basic groupings of characters, then, the court group, the tavern group, and the group of rebels, dominate Scenes i, ii, and iii, respectively. (The three groups, though they have interconnections, of course, will not be brought fully together until they meet at the Battle of Shrewsbury at the end of the play.)

But Shakespeare has gone further still in emphasizing the parallels and contrasts between the various characters—*parallels and contrasts* which exhibit them in meaningful relation to each other in terms of the purposes

of the play. In Scene i, the king reveals that he has a private problem and a public problem—as a man, and as a ruler. Scene ii goes on to exhibit the first; Scene iii, the second. But if Scenes ii and iii seem to contrast (from the standpoint of the king, ironically) the frivolousness of Hal and the warlike spirit of Hotspur, the two scenes are linked together—and linked with Scene i itself—by an ironic parallelism: all three scenes include councils: Scene i, the formal council of the king; Scene iii, Percy Hotspur's informal council with the other disaffected lords; and Scene ii, the "council" at the Boar's-Head Tavern which formulates plans for the Gadshill robbery. Finally, two of the councils hatch plots—though of different kinds—against the law and order for which the king stands. Thus, if we do have, in Act I, three different groups of characters that seem either unrelated or loosely related, the fact is that already there are patterns of relationship which we may expect to become more clearly defined later.

1. Why is it ironic that this act should open with the king's statement of satisfaction that England will be no longer convulsed with civil war?

2. Does the king, in Scenes i and ii, do anything to justify Hotspur's characterization of him as "this vile politician, Bolingbroke"?

3. The speech of Percy (Sc. iii, 29 ff.) about the "popinjay" lord is a speech which ordinarily might be expected to procure him the king's pardon—it impresses Blunt favorably. It does not, however, produce this effect. Could we attribute its failure to the fact that it may have seemed to the king to be a sneer at the Prince of Wales, about whose unwarlike conduct the king has already shown himself so sensitive?

4. Enumerate the puns in Falstaff's speeches in Scene ii (ll. 32–41 and 76–83). Note that in the first of these speeches there is a play on "night" and perhaps on "beauty" and "booty"; in the second, on "here apparent" and "heir apparent." Is it possible to say that there is a kind of poetry in Falstaff's speech as well as bantering good humor? That is, is there a secondary level of meaning for which we must look and which is more than mere fun?

5. In what ways does Falstaff show that he is thoroughly aware of the charge that he is corrupting the prince? What is the effect upon us of this disclosure of his awareness?

6. In what ways has Shakespeare played down the seriousness of the Gadshill robbery as a crime: in the case of the prince? In the case of Falstaff?

7. Consider carefully Falstaff's speech in Scene ii (ll.199–206). Falstaff imitates the phraseology of the Puritans as he expresses the pious hope that the prince will be moved by Poins's good counsel to take part in the robbery. He wishes that "the true prince may, for recreation sake, prove a false thief." Does the antithesis between *true* and *false* insist: (1) upon the irony of the prince's becoming a false thief ("false" in the sense that all thieves are false; the word is used in this sense several times elsewhere in this play); or (2) upon the fact that the true prince, stealing "for recreation sake" will not be a genuine thief but a false one—a spurious thief, a

"play" thief; or (3) upon the fact that since he is the true prince—he will eventually be king, and the king can do no wrong—he can only pretend to be a thief, that is, can be only a "false" thief; or (4) upon the suggestion that Hal is so truly the prince that he will betray the other thieves, as, indeed, a little later in the pl[illegible]
are hinted at? Note that th[illegible]
be prepared for, and hinted [illegible]
(l. 87), "Thou judgest *false* already . . ."; Falstaff says of Poins (ll. 144–45) "This is the most omnipotent villain that ever cried 'Stand' to a *true* man." Later, Poins describes Falstaff and the others (l. 241) as "*true*-bred cowards," and, in his final speech in Scene ii, Hal, promising to turn out a better man than he appears now, says, "By so much shall I *falsify* men's hopes" (l. 272). You will observe that in the latter two passages there is the paradoxical tone that distinguishes the true-prince-false-thief passage.

[illegible]

whose loyalty to the king is unquestioned, deprecates the charges made against Percy and attempts to excuse him before the king.

9. The speech which ends Scene ii is held by some critics to show that the prince is rather coldly calculating as he deliberately plans to use his reputation for idleness to his advantage later The speech, on the other hand, has been defended as a necessary piece of exposition· that is, the Prince's sudden reformation at the end of the play must not seem unmotivated. The audience must have some hint that the prince, all the time, had a better nature and intended to realize that nature when the time of trial came. It has been further argued that for an Elizabethan audience in particular it was necessary to save the prince's consistency of character—a *consistency* which would have been violated for them if the prince had undergone any real "change" in the course of the play.

Yet cannot one think of a further defense still, and one which does not depend so heavily on the conventions of Elizabethan thought? Does the speech not represent a young man whose conscience hurts him even in the midst of his trifling, and who is attempting to justify his conduct to himself? In other words, may the speech not be taken dramatically, not so much as an address to the audience (which might have better been spoken by another character or an agency such as the Greek chorus. See the Glossary) but rather as an argument addressed to himself as he attempts to justify to himself the latest—and most dangerous—madcap escapade, into which he has just consented to go?

ACT II

[SCENE I—Rochester. An inn yard.]

[*Enter a Carrier with a lantern in his hand.*]

First Car.: Heigh-ho! an it be not four by the day, I'll be hanged: Charles' wain [1] is over the new chimney, and yet our horse not packed. What, ostler!

Ost.: [*Within.*] Anon, anon.

First Car.: I prithee, Tom, beat Cut's saddle, put a few flocks in the point [2]; poor jade, is wrung in the withers out of all cess.[3] [*Enter another Carrier.*]

Sec. Car.: Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog, and that is the next way to give poor jades the bots: this house is turned upside down since Robin Ostler died.

First Car.: Poor fellow, never joyed since the price of oats rose; it was the death of him.

Sec. Car.: I think this be the most villainous house in all London road for fleas: I am stung like a tench.

First Car.: Like a tench! by the mass, there is ne'er a king christen could be better bit than I have been since the first cock. What, ostler! come away and be hanged! come away.

Sec. Car.: I have a gammon of bacon and two razes [4] of ginger, to be delivered as far as Charing-cross.

First Car.: God's body! the turkeys in my pannier are quite starved. What, ostler! A plague on thee! hast thou never an eye in thy head? canst not hear? An 't were not as good deed as drink, to break the pate on thee, I am a very villain. Come, and be hanged! hast no faith in thee? [*Enter Gadshill.*]

Gads.: Good morrow, carriers. What's o'clock?

First Car.: I think it be two o'clock.

Gads.: I prithee, lend me thy lantern, to see my gelding in the stable.

First Car.: Nay, by God, soft; I know a trick worth two of that, i' faith.

Gads.: I pray thee, lend me thine.

Sec. Car.: Ay, when? canst tell? Lend me thy lantern, quoth he? marry, I'll see thee hanged first.

Gads.: Sirrah carrier, what time do you mean to come to London?

Sec. Car.: Time enough to go to bed with a candle, I warrant thee. Come, neighbour Mugs, we'll call up the gentlemen: they will along with company, for they have great charge. [*Exeunt Carriers.*]

Gads.: What, ho! chamberlain!

Cham.: [*Within.*] At hand, quoth pick-purse.

Gads.: That's even as fair as—at hand, quoth the chamberlain; for thou variest no more from picking of purses than giving direction doth from labouring; thou layest the plot how. [*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Cham.: Good morrow, Master Gadshill. It holds current that I told you yesternight: there's a franklin in the wild of Kent hath brought three hundred marks with him in gold: I heard him tell it to one of his company last night at supper; a kind of auditor; one that hath abundance of charge too, God knows what. They are up already, and call for eggs and butter: they will away presently.

Gads.: Sirrah, if they meet not with Saint Nicholas' clerks,[5] I'll give thee this neck.

Cham.: No, I'll none of it: I pray thee, keep that for the hangman; for I know thou worshippest Saint Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may.

Gads.: What talkest thou to me of the hangman? if I hang, I'll make a fat pair of gallows; for if I hang, old Sir John hangs with me, and thou knowest he is no starveling. Tut! there are other Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace; that would, if matters should be looked into, for their own credit sake, make all whole. I am

[1] The Great Bear. [2] Pommel of the saddle. [3] Beyond all measure. [4] Roots.

[5] Highwaymen.

joined with no foot land-rakers,[6] no long-staff sixpenny strikers,[7] none of these mad mustachio purple-hued malt-worms[8]; but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters and great oneyers,[9] such as can hold in, such as will strike sooner than speak, and speak sooner than drink, and drink sooner than pray: and yet, 'zounds, I lie; for they pray continually to their saint, the commonwealth; or rather, not pray to her, but prey on her, for they ride up and down on her and make her their boots. 106

Cham.: What, the commonwealth their boots? will she hold out water in foul way? 109

Gads.: She will, she will; justice hath liquored her. We steal as in a castle, cock-sure; we have the receipt of fern-seed,[10] we walk invisible.

Gads.: Give me thy hand: thou shalt have a share in our purchase, as I am a true man.

Cham.: Nay, rather let me have it, as you are a false thief. 121

Gads.: Go to; "homo" is a common name to all men. Bid the ostler bring my gelding out of the stable. Farewell, you muddy knave. [*Exeunt.*] 125

[6] Roving vagabonds. [7] Men armed with staves, robbing for paltry sums [8] Drunkards [9] Perhaps a burlesque formation meaning "great ones" on the analogy of law*yers*. [10] Fern-seed, in the popular superstition, would make one invisible.

[Scene II—The highway, near Gadshill.]

[*Enter Prince Henry and Poins.*]

Poins: Come, shelter, shelter: I have removed Falstaff's horse, and he frets like a gummed velvet.[1]

Prince: Stand close. [*Enter Falstaff.*]

[1] Gum was sometimes used to give a gloss to velvet, though it made the cloth "fret" or wear out easily.

Fal.: Poins! Poins, and be hanged! Poins! 6

Prince: Peace, ye fat-kidneyed rascal! what a brawling dost thou keep!

Fal.: Where's Poins, Hal?

Prince: He is walked up to the top of the hill: I'll go seek him. 11

Fal.: I am accursed to rob in that thief's company: the rascal hath removed my horse, and tied him I know not where. If I travel but four foot by the squier[2] further afoot, I shall break my wind. Well, I doubt not but to die a fair death for all this, if I 'scape hanging for killing that rogue. I have forsworn his company hourly any time this two and twenty years, and yet I am bewitched with the rogue's company. If the rascal have not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hanged; it could not be else; I have drunk medicines Poins! Hal! a plague upon you both! Bardolph! Peto! I'll starve ere I'll rob a foot further. An 't were not as good a deed as drink, to turn true man and to leave these rogues, I am the veriest varlet that ever chewed with a tooth Eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles afoot with me; and the stony-hearted villains know it well enough: a plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another! [*They whistle.*] Whew! A plague upon you all! Give me my horse, you rogues; give me my horse, and be hanged! 40

If thou canst hear the tread of travellers

Fal.: Have you any levers to lift me up again, being down? 'Sblood, I'll not bear mine own flesh so far afoot again for all the coin in thy father's exchequer. What a plague mean ye to colt[3] me thus? 48

Prince: Thou liest; thou art not colted, thou art uncolted.

Fal.: I prithee, good Prince Hal, help me to my horse, good king's son

Prince: Out, ye rogue! shall I be your ostler? 54

[2] Foot-rule [3] Cheat.

Fal.: Go, hang thyself in thine own heir-apparent garters! If I be ta'en, I'll peach for this. An I have not ballads made on you all and sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison: when a jest is so forward, and afoot too! I hate it. [*Enter Gadshill, Bardolph and Peto with him.*]

Gads.: Stand.

Fal.: So I do, against my will.

Poins: O, 'tis our setter [4]: I know his voice. Bardolph, what news?

Bard.: Case ye, case ye; on with your vizards: there's money of the king's coming down the hill; 'tis going to the king's exchequer.

Fal.: You lie, you rogue; 'tis going to the king's tavern.

Gads.: There 's enough to make us all.

Fal.: To be hanged.

Prince: Sirs, you four shall front them in the narrow lane; Ned Poins and I will walk lower: if they 'scape from your encounter, then they light on us.

Peto: How many be there of them?

Gads.: Some eight or ten.

Fal.: 'Zounds, will they not rob us?

Prince: What, a coward, Sir John Paunch?

Fal.: Indeed, I am not John of Gaunt, your grandfather; but yet no coward, Hal.

Prince: Well, we leave that to the proof.

Poins: Sirrah Jack, thy horse stands behind the hedge: when thou needest him, there thou shalt find him. Farewell, and stand fast.

Fal.: Now cannot I strike him, if I should be hanged.

Prince: Ned, where are our disguises?

Poins: Here, hard by: stand close. [*Exeunt Prince and Poins.*]

Fal.: Now, my masters, happy man be his dole, say I: every man to his business. [*Enter the Travellers.*]

First Trav.: Come, neighbour: the boy shall lead our horses down the hill; we'll walk afoot awhile, and ease our legs.

Thieves: Stand!

Travellers: Jesus bless us!

Fal.: Strike; down with them; cut the villains' throats: ah! whoreson caterpillars! bacon-fed knaves! they hate us youth: down with them: fleece them.

Travellers: O, we are undone, both we and ours for ever!

Fal.: Hang ye, gorbellied knaves, are ye undone? No, ye fat chuffs [5]; I would your store were here! On, bacons, on! What, ye knaves! young men must live. You are grandjurors, are ye? we'll jure ye, faith. [*Here they rob them and bind them. Exeunt.*] [*Re-enter Prince Henry and Poins.*]

Prince: The thieves have bound the true men. Now could thou and I rob the thieves and go merrily to London, it would be argument for a week, laughter for a month and a good jest for ever.

Poins: Stand close; I hear them coming. [*Enter the Thieves again.*]

Fal.: Come, my masters, let us share, and then to horse before day. An the Prince and Poins be not two arrant cowards, there's no equity stirring: there's no more valour in that Poins than in a wild-duck.

Prince: Your money!

Poins: Villains! [*As they are sharing, the Prince and Poins set upon them; they all run away; and Falstaff, after a blow or two, runs away too, leaving the booty behind them.*]

Prince: Got with much ease. Now merrily to horse:
The thieves are all scatter'd and possess'd with fear
So strongly that they dare not meet each other;
Each takes his fellow for an officer.
Away, good Ned. Falstaff sweats to death,
And lards the lean earth as he walks along:
Were't not for laughing, I should pity him.

Poins: How the rogue roar'd!

[*Exeunt.*]

[4] The thieves' decoy—here, Gadshill.

[5] Churls.

[SCENE III—Warkworth castle.]

[*Enter Hotspur, solus, reading a letter.*]

Hot.: "But, for mine own part, my lord, I could be well contented to be there, in respect of the love I bear your house." He could be contented: why is he not, then? In respect of the love he bears our house: he shows in this, he loves his own barn better than he loves our house. Let me see some more. "The purpose you undertake is dangerous";—why, that's certain: 'tis dangerous to take a cold, to sleep, to drink; but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety. "The purpose you undertake is dangerous; the friends you have named uncertain; the time itself unsorted, and your whole plot too light for the counterpoise of so great an opposition." Say you so, say you so? I say unto you again, you are a shallow cowardly hind, and you lie. What a lack-brain is this! By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid; our friends true and constant, a good plot, good friends, and full of [illegible] the plot and the general course of the action. 'Zounds, an I were now by this rascal, I could brain him with his lady's fan. Is there not my father, my uncle and myself? lord Edmund Mortimer, my lord of York and Owen Glendower? is there not besides the Douglas? have I not all their letters to meet me in arms by the ninth of the next month? and are they not some of them set forward already? What a pagan rascal is this! an infidel! Ha! you shall see now in very sincerity of fear and cold heart, will he to the king and lay open all our proceedings. O, I could divide myself and go to buffets, for moving such a dish of skim milk with so honourable an action! Hang him! let him tell the king: we are prepared. I will set forward to-night. [*Enter Lady Percy.*] How now, Kate! I must leave you within these two hours.

Lady: O, my good lord, why are you thus alone?
For what offence have I this fortnight been
A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed?
Tell me, sweet lord, what is 't that takes from thee
Thy stomach, pleasure and thy golden sleep?
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,
And start so often when thou sit'st alone?
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks,
And given my treasures and my rights of thee
To thick-eyed musing and cursed melancholy?
In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watch'd,
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars,
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed;
Cry "Courage! to the field!" And thou hast talk'd
Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,
Of pasiladoes, frontiers, parapets,
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,
Of prisoners' ransom and of soldiers slain,
And all the currents of a heady fight.
Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war
And thus hath so bestirr'd thee in thy sleep,
That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow,
Like bubbles in a late-disturbed stream,
And in thy face strange motions have appear'd,
Such as we see when men restrain their breath
On some great sudden hest.[1] O, what portents are these?

[1] Command

Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,
And I must know it, else he loves me not.
Hot.: What, ho!
[*Enter Servant.*]
Is Gilliams with the packet gone?
Serv.: He is, my lord, an hour ago.
Hot.: Hath Butler brought those horses from the sheriff?
Serv.: One horse, my lord, he brought even now.
Hot.: What horse? a roan, a crop-ear, is it not?
Serv.: It is, my lord.
Hot.: That roan shall be my throne.
Well, I will back him straight: O esperance![2]
Bid Butler lead him forth into the park.
[*Exit Servant.*]
Lady: But hear you, my lord.
Hot.: What say'st thou, my lady?
Lady: What is it carries you away?
Hot.: Why, my horse, my love, my horse.
Lady: Out, you mad-headed ape!
A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen
As you are toss'd with. In faith,
I'll know your business, Harry, that I will.
I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir
About his title, and hath sent for you
To line[3] his enterprize: but if you go,—
Hot.: So far afoot, I shall be weary, love.
Lady: Come, come, you paraquito, answer me
Directly unto this question that I ask:
In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.
Hot.: Away,
Away, you trifler! Love! I love thee not,
I care not for thee, Kate: this is no world
To play with mammets[4] and to tilt with lips:

[2] The motto of the Percy family. [3] Support. [4] Dolls.

We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns,[5]
And pass them current too. God's me,[6] my horse!
What say'st thou, Kate? what would'st thou have with me?
Lady: Do you not love me? do you not, indeed?
Well, do not then; for since you love me not,
I will not love myself. Do you not love me?
Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.
Hot.: Come, wilt thou see me ride?
And when I am o' horseback, I will swear
I love thee infinitely. But hark you, Kate;
I must not have you henceforth question me
Whither I go, nor reason whereabout:
Whither I must, I must; and, to conclude,
This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.
I know you wise, but yet no farther wise
Than Harry Percy's wife: constant you are,
But yet a woman: and for secrecy,
No lady closer; for I well believe
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know;
And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.
Lady: How! so far?
Hot.: Not an inch further. But hark you, Kate:
Whither I go, thither shall you go too;
To-day will I set forth, to-morrow you.
Will this content you, Kate?
Lady: It must of force.
[*Exeunt.*]

[5] The crown of the head, but also the coin as "And pass them current too" suggests. [6] God is for me.

[SCENE IV—The Boar's-Head Tavern, Eastcheap.]

[*Enter the Prince and Poins.*]

Prince: Ned, prithee, come out of that fat[1] room, and lend me thy hand to laugh a little.

Poins: Where hast been, Hal?

[1] Stuffy.

Prince: With three or four loggerheads amongst three or four score hogsheads. I have sounded the very base-string of humility. Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers; and can call them all by their christen names, as Tom, Dick, and Francis. They take it already upon their salvation, that though I be but Prince of Wales, yet I am the king of courtesy; and tell me flatly I am no proud Jack, like Falstaff, but a Corinthian,[2] a lad of mettle, a good boy, by the Lord, so they call me, and when I am king of England, I shall command all the good lads in Eastcheap. They call drinking deep, dyeing scarlet; and when you breathe in your watering, they cry "hem!" and bid you play it off. To conclude, I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour, that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life. I tell thee, Ned, thou hast lost much honour, that thou wert not with me in this action. But, sweet Ned,—to [illegible]

one that never spoke other English in his life than "Eight shillings and sixpence," and "You are welcome," with this shrill addition, "Anon, anon, sir! Score a pint of bastard[4] in the Half-moon," or so But, Ned, to drive away the time till Falstaff come, I prithee, do thou stand in some by-room, while I question my puny drawer to what end [illegible] aside, and I'll show thee a precedent.

Poins: Francis!

Prince. Thou art perfect

Poins. Francis! [*Exit Poins*] [*Enter Francis.*]

Fran : Anon, anon, sir. Look down into the Pomgarnet,[5] Ralph

Prince: Come hither, Francis.

Fran : My lord?

Prince: How long hast thou to serve, Francis?

Fran.: Forsooth, five years, and as much as to—

Poins: [*Within.*] Francis!

Fran.: Anon, anon, sir.

Prince: Five year! by 'r lady, a long lease for the clinking of pewter. But, Francis, darest thou be so valiant as to play the coward with thy indenture and show it a fair pair of heels and run from it?

Fran : O Lord, sir, I'll be sworn upon all the books in England, I could find in my heart.

Poins: [*Within.*] Francis!

Fran.. Anon, sir.

Prince: How old art thou, Francis?

Fran. Let me see—about Michaelmas next I shall be—

Poins: [*Within.*] Francis!

Fran : Anon, sir. Pray stay a little, my lord.

Prince Nay, but hark you, Francis for the sugar thou gavest me, 'twas a pennyworth, was't not?

Fran. O Lord, I would it had been two!

Prince I will give thee for it a thousand pound: ask me when thou wilt, and thou shalt have it.

Poins: [*Within.*] Francis!

Fran · Anon, anon.

Prince: Anon, Francis? No, Francis; but to-morrow, Francis; or Francis, o' Thursday; or indeed, Francis, when thou wilt. But, Francis!

Fran · My lord?

Prince Wilt thou rob this leathern jerkin, crystal-button, not-pated,[6] agate-ring, puke-stocking,[7] caddis-garter,[8] smooth-tongue, Spanish-pouch,[9]—

Fran O Lord, sir, who do you mean?

Prince Why, then, your brown bastard is your only drink, for look you, Francis, your white canvas doublet will sully. in Barbary, sir, it cannot come to so much.

[2] A good fellow, a hearty drinker [3] Tapster's boy. [4] A sweet wine of Spain [5] Pomegranate

[6] Crop-headed [7] Stockings of a dull gray color [8] A garter of worsted [9] Of Spanish leather

Fran.: What, sir?

Poins: [*Within.*] Francis!

Prince: Away, you rogue! dost thou not hear them call? [*Here they both call him; the drawer stands amazed, not knowing which way to go.*] [*Enter Vintner.*]

Vint.: What, standest thou still, and hearest such a calling? Look to the guests within. [*Exit Francis.*] My lord, old Sir John, with half-a-dozen more, are at the door: shall I let them in?

Prince: Let them alone awhile, and then open the door. [*Exit Vintner.*] Poins! [*Re-enter Poins.*]

Poins: Anon, anon, sir.

Prince: Sirrah, Falstaff and the rest of the thieves are at the door: shall we be merry?

Poins: As merry as crickets, my lad. But hark ye; what cunning match have you made with this jest of the drawer? come, what's the issue?

Prince: I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the old days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight. [*Re-enter Francis.*] What's o'clock, Francis?

Fran.: Anon, anon, sir. [*Exit.*]

Prince: That ever this fellow should have fewer words than a parrot, and yet the son of a woman! His industry is up-stairs and down-stairs; his eloquence the parcel of a reckoning. I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the north; he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife "Fie upon this quiet life! I want work." "O my sweet Harry," says she, "how many hast thou killed to-day?" "Give my roan horse a drench," says he; and answers "Some fourteen," an hour after; "a trifle, a trifle." I prithee, call in Falstaff: I'll play Percy, and that damned brawn shall play Dame Mortimer his wife. "Rivo!"[10] says the drunkard. Call in ribs, call in tallow. [*Enter Falstaff, Gadshill, Bardolph, and Peto; Francis following with wine.*]

Poins: Welcome, Jack: where hast thou been?

Fal.: A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! marry, and amen! Give me a cup of sack, boy. Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew nether stocks[11] and mend them and foot them too. A plague of all cowards! Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant? [*He drinks.*]

Prince: Didst thou ever see Titan[12] kiss a dish of butter? pitiful-hearted [creature], that melted at the sweet tale of the sun's! if thou didst, then behold that compound.

Fal.: You rogue, here's lime in this sack too: there is nothing but roguery to be found in villainous man: yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it. A villainous coward! Go thy ways, old Jack; die when thou wilt, if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring.[13] There live not three good men unhanged in England; and one of them is fat and grows old: God help the while! a bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver; I could sing psalms or any thing. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

Prince: How now, wool-sack! what mutter you?

Fal.: A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild-geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You Prince of Wales!

Prince: Why, you whoreson round man, what's the matter?

Fal.: Are not you a coward? answer me to that: and Poins there?

Poins: 'Zounds, ye fat paunch, an ye call me coward, by the Lord, I'll stab thee.

Fal.: I call thee coward! I'll see thee damned ere I call thee coward: but I would give a thousand pound I could

[10] An exclamation used at drinking-bouts.

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run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in the shoulders, you care not who sees your back: call you that backing of your friends? A plague upon such backing! give me them that will face me. Give me a cup of sack: I am a rogue, if I drunk to-day.

Prince: O villain! thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunkest last.

Fal.: All's one for that. [*He drinks.*] A plague of all cowards, still say I.

Prince: What's the matter?

Fal.: What's the matter! there be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

Prince: Where is it, Jack? where is it?

Fal.: Where is it! taken from us it is: a hundred upon poor four of us.

Prince. What, a hundred, man?

Fal.: I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have 'scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose, my buckler cut through and through, my sword hacked like a hand-saw—ecce signum! I never dealt better since I was a man: all would not do. A plague of all cowards! Let them speak if they speak more or less than truth, they are villains and the sons of darkness.

Prince: Speak, sirs; how was it?

Gads.: We four set upon some dozen—

Fal.: Sixteen, at least, my lord.

Gads.: And bound them.

Peto: No, no, they were not bound.

Fal.: You rogue, they were bound, every man of them; or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

Gads.: As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us—

Fal.: And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

Prince: What, fought you with them all?

Fal.: All! I know not what you call all; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish: if there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legged creature.

Prince: Pray God you have not murdered some of them.

Fal.: Nay, that's past praying for: I have peppered two of them; two I am sure I [illegible]

[illegible] knowest my old ward[14], here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me—

Prince: What, four? thou saidst but two even now.

Fal.: Four, Hal; I told thee four.

Poins: Ay, ay, he said four.

Fal.: These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

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Fal.: In buckram.

Poins: Ay, four, in buckram suits.

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Fal.: Dost thou hear me, Hal?

Prince. Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

Fal.: Do so, for it is worth listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of—

Prince: So, two more already.

Fal.: Their points being broken,—

Poins: Down fell their hose.[15]

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[14] Guard in fencing. [15] There is a play here on points (of the swords) and "points," laces used for holding up the hose.

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Prince: Pray God you have not murdered some of them.

Fal.: Nay, that's past praying for: I have peppered two of them; two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward [14], here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me—

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Fal.: Began to give me ground: but I followed me close, came in foot and hand; and with a thought seven of the eleven I paid.

Prince: O monstrous! eleven buckram men grown out of two!

Fal.: But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back and let drive at me; for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.

Prince. These lies are like their father that begets them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable Why, thou clay-brained

[14] Guard, in fencing [15] There is a play here on points (of the swords) and "points," laces used for holding up the hose

guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson, obscene, greasy tallow-ketch,[16]—

Fal.: What, art thou mad? art thou mad? is not the truth the truth?

Prince: Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal green, when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand? come, tell us your reason: what sayest thou to this?

Poins: Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

Fal.: What, upon compulsion? 'Zounds, an I were at the strappado,[17] or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion! if reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

Prince: I'll be no longer guilty of this sin; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horse-back-breaker, this huge hill of flesh,—

Fal.: 'Sblood, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's[18] tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stock-fish![19] O for breath to utter what is like thee! you tailor's-yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing-tuck,[20]—

Prince: Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again: and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this.

Poins: Mark, Jack.

Prince: We two saw you four set on four and bound them, and were masters of their wealth. Mark now, how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four; and, with a word, out-faced you from your prize, and have it; yea, and can show it you here in the house: and, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy and still run and roared, as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

Poins: Come, let's hear, Jack; what trick hast thou now?

Fal.: By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters: was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? should I turn upon the true prince? why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules: but beware instinct; the lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter; I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee during my life; I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors: watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry? shall we have a play extempore?

Prince: Content; and the argument shall be thy running away.

Fal.: Ah, no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me! [*Enter Hostess.*]

Host.: O Jesu, my lord the prince!

Prince: How now, my lady the hostess! what sayest thou to me?

Host.: Marry, my lord, there is a nobleman of the court at door would speak with you: he says he comes from your father.

Prince: Give him as much as will make him a royal man, and send him back again to my mother.

Fal.: What manner of man is he?

Host.: An old man.

Fal.: What doth gravity out of his bed at midnight? Shall I give him his answer?

Prince: Prithee, do, Jack.

Fal.: 'Faith, and I'll send him packing. [*Exit.*]

Prince: Now, sirs: by'r lady, you fought fair; so did you, Peto; so did you, Bardolph: you are lions too, you ran away upon instinct, you will not touch the true prince; no, fie!

Bard.: 'Faith, I ran when I saw others run.

[16] Tub of tallow. [17] A Spanish torture. [18] Ox-tongue. [19] A dried fish. [20] Sword set upright.

Prince: Thy state is taken for a joined-stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown!

Fal.: Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee, now shalt thou be moved. Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein.[23]

Prince: Well, here is my leg.[24]

Fal.: And here is my speech. Stand aside, nobility.

Host.: O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith!

Fal.: Weep not, sweet queen; for
 trickling tears are vain.

Host.: O, the father, how he holds his countenance!

Fal.: For God's sake, lords, convey
 my tristful queen;
For tears do stop the flood-gates of her
 eyes.

Host.: O Jesu, he doth it as like one of these harlotry[25] players as ever I see!

Fal.: Peace, good pint-pot; peace, good tickle-brain. Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears. That thou art my son, I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion, but chiefly a villainous trick of thine eye and a foolish hanging of thy nether lip, that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point; why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher[26] and eat blackberries? a question not to be asked. Shall the son of England prove a thief and take purses? a question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch: this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest: for, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink but in tears, not in pleasure but in passion, not in words only, but in woes also: and yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

Prince: What manner of man, an it like your majesty?

Fal.: A goodly portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty; or, by'r lady, inclining to three score; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff: if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff: him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?

Prince: Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.

Fal.: Depose me? if thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker[27] or a poulter's hare.

Prince: Well, here I am set.

Fal.: And here I stand: judge, my masters.

Prince: Now, Harry, whence come you?

Fal.: My noble lord, from Eastcheap.

Prince: The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

Fal.: 'Sblood, my lord, they are false: nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith.

Prince: Swearest thou, ungracious boy? henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace: there is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man; a tun of man is

[23] A reference to the bombastic style of an early Elizabethan tragedy, the *Lamentable Tragedy of . . . Cambises.* [24] An elaborate bow. [25] Scurvy, good-for-nothing. [26] Truant.

[27] Suckling rabbit.

thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch [31] of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard [32] of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villainy? wherein villainous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing?

Fal.: I would your grace would take me with you [33]: whom means your grace?

Prince: That villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

Fal.: My lord, the man I know.

Prince: I know thou dost.

Fal.: But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old, the more the pity, his white hairs do witness it; but that he is, saving your reverence, a whoremaster, that I utterly deny If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! if to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins: but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company: banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

Prince: I do, I will. [*A knocking heard. Exeunt Hostess, Francis, and Bardolph. Re-enter Bardolph, running*]

Bard.: O, my lord, my lord! the sheriff with a most monstrous watch is at the door.

Fal.: Out, ye rogue! Play out the play: I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff. [*Re-enter the Hostess.*]

Host.: O Jesu, my lord, my lord!

Fal.: Heigh, heigh! the devil rides upon a fiddlestick: what's the matter?

Host.: The sheriff and all the watch are at the door: they are come to search the house. Shall I let them in?

Fal.: Dost thou hear, Hal? never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit: thou art essentially mad, without seeming so.

Prince: And thou a natural coward, without instinct.

Fal.: I deny your major [34]: if you will deny the sheriff, so, if not, let him enter: if I become not a cart as well as another man, a plague on my bringing up! I hope I shall as soon be strangled with a [illegible] as another.

Prince: Go, hide thee behind the arras: the rest walk up above. Now, my masters, for a true face and good conscience

Fal.: Both which I have [illegible] their date is out, and therefore [illegible] me.

Prince: Call in the sheriff [illegible] *except the Prince* [illegible] *Sheriff and the* [illegible]

Now, master sheriff, [illegible]
with me?

Sher.: First, [illegible]
hue and cry

Hath follow'd [illegible]
house.

Prince: What [illegible]

Sher.: One of [illegible]
[illegible]

A gross fat man.

[illegible]

Prince: [illegible]
[illegible]

For I [illegible]
[illegible]

And, [illegible]
[illegible]

That I [illegible]

[illegible]

[31] Sifting-bin. [32] A large drinking-vessel made of leather. [33] I . . . would explain what you mean.

[34] [illegible]

For any thing he shall be charged withal:
And so let me entreat you leave the house.

Sher.: I will, my lord. There are two gentlemen
Have in this robbery lost three hundred marks.

Prince: It may be so: if he have robb'd these men,
He shall be answerable; and so farewell.

Sher.: Good night, my noble lord.

Prince: I think it is good morrow, is it not?

Sher.: Indeed, my lord, I think it be two o'clock. [*Exeunt Sheriff and Carrier.*]

Prince: This oily rascal is known as well as Paul's.[32] Go, call him forth.

Peto: Falstaff!—Fast asleep behind the arras, and snorting like a horse.

Prince: Hark, how hard he fetches breath. Search his pockets. [*He searcheth his pockets, and findeth certain papers.*] What hast thou found?

Peto: Nothing but papers, my lord.

[32] St. Paul's Cathedral.

Prince: Let's see what they be: read them.

Peto: [*Reads.*]

Item, A capon, . . .	2*s.* 2*d.*
Item, Sauce, ...	4*d.*
Item, Sack, two gallons	5*s.* 8*d.*
Item, Anchovies and sack after supper, .	2*s.* 6*d.*
Item Bread, ...	*ob.*

Prince: O monstrous! but one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack! What there is else, keep close; we'll read it at more advantage: there let him sleep till day. I'll to the court in the morning. We must all to the wars, and thy place shall be honourable. I'll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot; and I know his death will be a march of twelve-score.[33] The money shall be paid back again with advantage. Be with me betimes in the morning; and so, good morrow, Peto.

Peto: Good morrow, good my lord. [*Exeunt.*]

[33] Twelve-score paces.

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON ACT II

1. With regard to Scene iii, may it be said that Percy is careless and impetuous with regard to momentous events, preparing for them far less carefully than the prince and his friends prepare for the really well-planned Gadshill robbery? If so, how does this anticipate later events?

2. Is Scene i justified? If so, in what terms: as necessary exposition? To provide suspense? Could it be omitted without loss? If so, why might we suppose Shakespeare to have included it?

3. Analyze Falstaff's speeches in Scene ii and notice the amount of ironic reversal that is involved: e.g., "I'll starve ere I'll rob a foot further"—as if Falstaff were slaving away at an honest occupation; "Hang ye, gorbellied knaves, are ye undone? No, ye fat chuffs"—as if Falstaff himself were lean as a rail, etc., etc. Shakespeare, of course, has Falstaff reverse his real role for humorous effect. But what does this constant reversal tell us about the nature of Falstaff's humor? Does it reflect a knowing or a naïve attitude toward the world? Toward himself? Compare the constant reversals which are the basis of a good deal of the wit in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, and the use to which Wilde puts them.

4. In Falstaff's speech in Scene iv (ll. 176–77) what is the implication of the statement that "there live not three good men unhanged in Eng-

land"? What is the force of the expression "good men" here? What sort of "good men" are hanged? Is this another one of the many hints that Falstaff is constantly suggesting a "transvaluation of values"?

5. Consider Falstaff's speech in Scene iv (ll. 197–206). Notice the number of ways in which each sentence may be read: e.g., he tells Poins, "but I would give a thousand pound I could run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in the shoulders, you care not who sees your back: call you that backing of your friends?" Primarily, of course, Falstaff is retorting to the charge that he ran away, by means of the child's repartee of "You did it too." He does not bother to deny that he ran away; he only wishes that he could run as fast as Poins can. Poins has a good enough back: he wouldn't care whether anyone saw *him* run away. Poins cares only for [illegible]

Falstaff by implication admits the charge that he has run away.

In the same way, his statement, "I am a rogue, if I drunk today," is primarily an emphatic way of asserting his thirst. But taken literally, it is a gross and obvious falsehood. Falstaff hardly intends to be taken literally, and when he is taken literally, he does not attempt to argue the point: "All's one for that," he says. But the literal meaning is perfectly true: Falstaff is a rogue—though a very pleasant rogue.

It is with precisely this same expression that Falstaff begins the account of his adventures at Gadshill: "I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together." And the expression is used to introduce what, it must be obvious to any of his hearers, is another barefaced lie. Falstaff would hardly attempt seriously to convince Hal that he and his three companions had actually fought with a "hundred." Does not [illegible] the [illegible]

story? To prove that he is really unruffled by events by showing that he is able to drink and lie as powerfully as ever? To tell a story that will be certain to draw contradictions from the prince and thus make the prince reveal what really happened to him and Poins? To brazen out his humiliation by turning the joke on himself—that is, by pretending to make a hero of himself, and yet, by so obviously exaggerating the heroism to absurdity that he shows he is perfectly aware of the total situation, and indeed remains the master of the situation? Or is Falstaff's motive a combination of a number of these possibilities? Suppose Falstaff's brazening out of the situations were done without his wit: how would the tone of Scene iv be changed?

Falstaff has been charged with being a coward and has been vehemently defended against the charge, first by Maurice Morgann in the later eighteenth century, and since that time by numerous critics on down to the present day. Actually the charge and the defense tend to miss the whole point.

If it is a little absurd to attempt to prove in the face of the Gadshill scene that Falstaff is a valiant man, it is only a little less absurd to use the scene to prove Falstaff's cowardice. Even a thief possessed of a good measure of personal valor will make good his escape if there is a good chance that standing his ground will increase the risk of his identification or capture. Even a rather brave thief, in Falstaff's position, might have run, for to be attacked themselves was the last thing that the successful thieves counted on.

Falstaff is no braver than he should be, doubtless, but he is certainly not a fool. He knows that a bag of gold filched without too much risk is one thing, but that the same bag, if it involves the risk of hanging, is quite another. He knows, on the other hand, as he recovers his breath after making good his escape, that it is a likely tale to turn up with—this story that he had made good the robbery and then by strange coincidence was at once robbed himself. He hacks his sword and tickles his nose with spear grass to prepare supporting evidence for a story that—whatever its merits—will have a better chance than the other. But Falstaff knows how much that story will bear—he sizes up the situation quickly and expertly—and he is able to shift his ground rapidly enough to remain in command of the situation at the end. For, when the prince in triumph asks, "What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?" Falstaff is not even for a moment at a loss. His story about being brave by instinct is absurd, of course (he uses *instinct* as if it were a technical term, without moral significance, the use of which could remove his act from the realm of moral significance); but the "instinct" that prompts the story is not absurd at all. Falstaff is completely at home now. He never lacks a device. The gold is safe, after all, he now knows. First things first. The lads have the money; the joke has been a good joke; and Falstaff has capped the joke for them. "What, shall we be merry! shall we have a play extempore?"

6. How does the byplay between Percy and his wife (Scene iii) balance the merriment of the tavern scenes? What does it tell the reader about the real attitude of these two people to each other? Does Percy love his wife?

7. Prince Hal has been accused of snobbish cruelty in his treatment of Francis, the serving boy. Discuss the merits of this charge. Does the Francis scene have any real function in the play? Does the humor remind you in any way of that found in Plautus's *The Twin Menaechmi?* Does the prince's speech suggest modern "double-talk" comedy?

8. The speech which Falstaff as "king" makes to his errant son would be doubly amusing to an Elizabethan audience because it involves a clever parody of the style of John Lyly's short fiction *Euphues*, the highly artificial and elaborate style of which had recently been the rage in England. For an audience unfamiliar with *Euphues*, the element of parody, of course, is lost; but how are the elaborate formality, the carefully contrived antitheses, the references to "unnatural natural history," and the sententious treatment of the obvious, appropriate to a take-off on the formality of the

court? Is the speech typical of Falstaff's humor in that it [illegible] against the pretensions and hypocrisies always associated with a [illegible] which takes itself with too much seriousness? What would be shown [illegible] by the fact that Hal, when he is acting the part of the king, [illegible] speech in the same Euphuistic style?

9. Notice, too, that the theme of the prince's keeping bad [illegible] pears as the theme of the "play extempore," and that Falstaff, when he plays the role of Hal, is still occupied with a defense of himself. The defense is made in jest; it is made for the occasion. To what extent [illegible] it be taken as a serious defense?

10. What does Shakespeare gain, if anything, by having, at the height of the merriment, a messenger from the court bring the [illegible] news that the rebellion has broken out? What do we learn about Falstaff from his reaction to the news? What about Prince Hal from his [illegible]? Is Falstaff serious when he asks Hal ". . . art thou not horribly afraid?"

11. When the sheriff calls at the tavern seeking Falstaff, Falstaff's fate rests in the prince's hands. Mr. Dover Wilson, in a [illegible] argues that Falstaff's speech (ll. 633–38) is "a [illegible] of [illegible] of heart, which looks Death straight in the eyes without [illegible] aside." But does Falstaff really have any doubt as to what the prince will do?

12. Falstaff and his companions, as we have seen, [illegible]. The relatively short Scene III seems [illegible] more than remind us of the political [illegible] more important in the play. We see a [illegible] between Hal and Hotspur; and we see a further step taken in the "plot" while the other "plot" is almost completed.

Perhaps, however, Shakespeare is doing a little more [illegible] [illegible] instance, that Hotspur's plot is [illegible] tion"; when Peto had asked, "[illegible]" [illegible] had answered "Some eight or ten," [illegible] they not rob us?" (Sc. II, [illegible]). [illegible] ironically, to evoke the same [illegible]

The comparison goes a step further [illegible] Hotspur calls the writer "[illegible]" and "[illegible]," and just after Falstaff expresses his fear [illegible] coward. Then, with some [illegible] complex. When he first enters [illegible] refrain, "A plague on all cowards!" [illegible] words to the men he thought had [illegible] in the robbery [illegible] Poins (here they are [illegible] And a great deal more is said about cowardice. Does Shakespeare [illegible] pear, then, to be carrying on the theme of cowardice which runs through

all the rest of the act and which, as we have seen (see question 5 above), is a very complex one? Not only is cowardice not easy to define, but, ironically, the same charges are called forth by both comic and serious plots.

Hotspur's next sentence appears to provide a still more marked continuation of a theme that runs through the first two acts: his friends, he says, are "*true* and constant . . . good friends . . . very good friends," and the writer of the letter is "an *infidel*." It is difficult not to believe that Shakespeare is here picking up a concept which was first introduced in Act I, as we saw, when Falstaff said that the "*true* prince" might become a "*false* thief" (see Act I, question 7). If these words were used only in these two places, we would have to be most hesitant about trying to find a connection between them, but the fact is that there is a sort of *true-false* chorus running all through Act II. In Scene i the Chamberlain says to Gadshill, "I know thou worshippest Saint Nicholas as *truly* as a man of *falsehood* may" (ll. 79–82); Gadshill says, ". . . I am a *true* man," and the Chamberlain replies, ". . . rather . . . you are a *false* thief" (ll. 119–21). In Scene ii Falstaff says it might be a good thing to become a "*true* man," especially when "thieves cannot be *true* to one another!" (ll. 29, 36). After the first robbery, Hal comments to Poins that the "thieves have bound the *true* men" (Sc. ii, 120). Then comes the Hotspur scene which we have already quoted. Next we see Hal informing Falstaff what had actually happened at the robbery—and what phrase does Falstaff keep repeating in his following speech? "The *true* prince"—three times, an epithet true in one sense and, in another, ironic. Hal playfully echoes the phrase a little later (Sc. iv, 395), and then Bardolph, referring to the blood that came from their "tickled" noses, says Falstaff would have them "swear it was the blood of *true* men" (l. 408). In the mock-trial scene Falstaff avers that the complaints against him are *false* and refers to himself as "*true* Jack Falstaff" (ll. 583 and 626). Finally, when, a moment later, the sheriff arrives, Falstaff exhorts Hal, ". . . never call a *true* piece of gold a *counterfeit*" (ll. 648–49); but he laughs at himself when Hal, about to admit the sheriff and his men, says, "Now . . . for a *true* face . . ." (l. 661).

In some of these passages the words *true* and *false* are clearly meant in a literal sense; elsewhere they are ironic. But whatever the tone, the very frequency of use—which the actors probably called attention to by their reading of the lines—suggests that the words occur by design rather than by accident. What might be the design?

May it not be a reminder, perhaps, of the complexities one runs into when one sets out to define *true* and *false* (like the difficulties presented by the word *coward*)? What *is* truth? If Falstaff's fellow-hold-up men do not observe their commitments to him, they are in one sense not *true;* if Hotspur's party do not stick to him, they are not *true*. But if the associates are not *true* to Falstaff and Hotspur respectively, are they not, in another sense, the more *true* to the king? It may be just to suggest that here we have a *relativistic* view of what is true and false; if that is so, it immediately leads us to ask the question, "Is Shakespeare, in presenting the complexi-

ties of truth, going to be content to say that it is relative, or, in the [illegible] world about which he writes here, will he present, finally, [illegible] *truth?*" The answer, of course, we must find in the rest of the play, [illegible] is clear, we must find it in the conduct of Hal. In what way will he [illegible] *true?* Or will he be *true* in several ways at once?

13. Notice the speech in Scene iv in which Hal makes fun of Hotspur (ll. 136–46). In one sense the ridicule might be interpreted as [illegible] now call a "defense mechanism." Is there, on the other hand, [illegible] valid in the ridicule? Does Hal hit off any Hotspur foibles [illegible] the relationship of this speech to the contents of Scene ii. [illegible] speech, "Give my roan horse a drench" be taken as an echo of [illegible] "That roan shall be my throne"? (ll. 143–44 and [illegible])

14. We have already seen Falstaff making a [illegible] Act I, question 4). Note that Falstaff keeps using [illegible] Act II. Find the passages in question. Note that, [illegible] places the words might be used literally, they [illegible] ironic sense. A skilled actor could give them very [illegible] would be suggested by such emphasis?

ACT III

[SCENE I—Bangor. The Archdeacon's house.]

[*Enter Hotspur, Worcester, Mortimer, and Glendower.*]

Mort.: These promises are fair, the parties sure,
And our induction full of prosperous hope.

Hot.: Lord Mortimer, and cousin Glendower,
Will you sit down?
And uncle Worcester: a plague upon it!
I have forgot the map.

Glend.: No, here it is.
Sit, cousin Percy; sit, good cousin Hotspur,
For by that name as oft as Lancaster
Doth speak of you, his cheek looks pale and with
A rising sigh he wisheth you in heaven.

Hot.: And you in hell as often as he hears
Owen Glendower spoke of.

Glend.: I cannot blame him: at my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,

Of [illegible]
The [illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] your mother's [illegible] fire,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] shook.
[illegible] were all on fire,
[illegible]
[illegible] earth shook to see
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] breaks forth
[illegible]
[illegible]

Our grandam earth, having this distemperature,
In passion shook.
Glend.: Cousin, of many men
I do not bear these crossings. Give me leave
To tell you once again that at my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous to the frighted fields.
These signs have mark'd me extraordinary;
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men.
Where is he living, clipp'd in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,
Which calls me pupil, or hath read to me?
And bring him out that is but woman's son
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art
And hold me pace in deep experiments.
Hot.: I think there's no man speaks better Welsh.
I'll to dinner.
Mort.: Peace, cousin Percy; you will make him mad.
Glend.: I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
Hot.: Why, so can I, or so can any man;
But will they come when you do call for them?
Glend.: Why, I can teach you, cousin, to command
The devil.
Hot.: And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the devil
By telling truth: tell truth and shame the devil.
If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither,
And I'll be sworn I have power to shame him hence.
O, while you live, tell truth and shame the devil!
Mort.: Come, come, no more of this unprofitable chat.
Glend.: Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke made head
Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye
And sandy-bottom'd Severn have I sent him
Bootless[3] home and weather-beaten back.
Hot.: Home without boots, and in foul weather too!
How 'scapes he agues, in the devil's name?
Glend.: Come, here's the map: shall we divide our right
According to our threefold order ta'en?
Mort.: The archdeacon hath divided it
Into three limits very equally:
England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,
By south and east is to my part assign'd:
All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,
And all the fertile land within that bound,
To Owen Glendower: and, dear coz, to you
The remnant northward, lying off from Trent.
And our indentures tripartite are drawn;
Which being sealed interchangeably,
A business that this night may execute,
To-morrow, cousin Percy, you and I
And my good Lord of Worcester will set forth
To meet your father and the Scottish power,
As is appointed us, at Shrewsbury.
My father Glendower is not ready yet,
Nor shall we need his help these fourteen days.
Within that space you may have drawn together
Your tenants, friends and neighbouring gentlemen.
Glend.: A shorter time shall send me to you, lords:

[3] Without profit.

And in my conduct shall your ladies come;
From whom you now must steal and take no leave,
For there will be a world of water shed
Upon the parting of your wives and you.

Hot.: Methinks my moiety, north from Burton here,
In quantity equals not one of yours:
See how this river comes me cranking[4] in,
And cuts me from the best of all my land
A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle[5] out.
I'll have the current in this place damm'd up;
And here the smug and silver Trent shall run
In a new channel, fair and evenly;
It shall not wind with such a deep indent,
To rob me of so rich a bottom here.

Glend.: Not wind? it shall, it must; you see it doth.

Mort.: Yea, but
Mark how he bears his course, and runs me up
With like advantage on the other side;
Gelding the opposed continent as much
As on the other side it takes from you.

Wor.: Yea, but a little charge will trench him here
And on this north side win this cape of land;
And then he runs straight and even.

Hot.: I'll have it so: a little charge will do it.

Glend.: I'll not have it alter'd.

Hot.: Will not you?

Glend.: No, nor you shall not.

Hot.: Who shall say me nay?

Glend.: Why, that will I.

Hot.: Let me not understand you, then; speak it in Welsh.

Glend.: I can speak English, lord, as well as you;
For I was train'd up in the English court;
Where, being but young, I framed to the harp
Many as English ditty lovely well
And gave the tongue a helpful ornament,
A virtue that was never seen in you.

Hot.: Marry,
And I am glad of it with all my heart:
I had rather be a kitten and cry mew
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers;
I had rather hear a brazen canstick[6] turn'd,
Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree;
And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,
Nothing so much as mincing poetry:
'Tis like the forced gait of a shuffling nag.

Glend.: Come, you shall have Trent turn'd.

Hot.: I do not care: I'll give thrice so much land
To any well-deserving friend:
[illegible]
I [illegible]
Are the indentures drawn? shall we be gone?

Glend.: The moon shines fair; you may away by night:
I'll haste the writer and withal
Break with your wives of your departure hence:
I am afraid my daughter will run mad,
So much she doteth on her Mortimer.
[*Exit.*]

Mort.: Fie, cousin Percy! how you cross my father!

Hot.: I cannot choose: sometime he angers me
With telling me of the moldwarp[7] and the ant,
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,

[4] Winding [5] Corner-piece.

[6] A brazen candlestick turned on the lathe.
[7] Mole.

A couching lion and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble[8] stuff
As puts me from my faith. I tell you what:
He held me last night at least nine hours
In reckoning up the several devils' names
That were his lackeys: I cried "hum," and "well, go to,"
But mark'd him not a word. O, he is as tedious
As a tired horse, a railing wife;
Worse than a smoky house: I had rather live
With cheese and garlic in a windmill, far,
Than feed on cates and have him talk to me
In any summer-house in Christendom.

Mort.: In faith, he is a worthy gentleman,
Exceedingly well read, and profited
In strange concealments, valiant as a lion
And wondrous affable and as bountiful
As mines of India. Shall I tell you, cousin?
He holds your temper in a high respect
And curbs himself even of his natural scope
When you come 'cross his humour; faith, he does:
I warrant you, that man is not alive
Might so have tempted him as you have done,
Without the taste of danger and reproof:
But do not use it oft, let me entreat you.

Wor.: In faith, my lord, you are too wilful-blame[9];
And since your coming hither have done enough
To put him quite beside his patience.
You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault:
Though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood,—
And that's the dearest grace it renders you,—
Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,
Defect of manners, want of government,
Pride, haughtiness, opinion and disdain:
The least of which haunting a nobleman
Loseth men's hearts and leaves behind a stain
Upon the beauty of all parts besides,
Beguiling them of commendation.[10]

Hot.: Well, I am school'd: good manners be your speed!
Here come our wives, and let us take our leave.

[*Re-enter Glendower with the ladies.*]

Mort.: This is the deadly spite that angers me;
My wife can speak no English, I no Welsh.

Glend.: My daughter weeps: she will not part with you;
She'll be a soldier too, she'll to the wars.

Mort.: Good father, tell her that she and my aunt Percy
Shall follow in your conduct speedily.

[*Glendower speaks to her in Welsh, and she answers him in the same.*]

Glend.: She is desperate here; a peevish self-will'd harlotry,[11] one that no persuasion can do good upon. [*The lady speaks in Welsh.*]

Mort.: I understand thy looks: that pretty Welsh
Which thou pour'st down from these swelling heavens
I am too perfect in; and, but for shame,
In such a parley should I answer thee.

[*The lady speaks again in Welsh.*]

I understand thy kisses and thou mine,
And that's a feeling disputation:
But I will never be a truant, love,
Till I have learn'd thy language; for thy tongue
Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penn'd,
Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,
With ravishing division, to her lute.

Glend.: Nay, if you melt, then will

[8] Mixed-up. [9] Blameworthy in your obstinacy.

[10] Cheating them of the approval they would like to give. [11] Hussy, baggage.

she run mad. [*The lady speaks again in Welsh.*]

Mort.: O, I am ignorance itself in this!

Glend.: She bids you on the wanton[12] rushes lay you down
And rest your gentle head upon her lap,
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you
And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep,
Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness,
Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep
As is the difference betwixt day and night
The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team
Begins his golden progress in the east.

Mort.: With all my heart I'll sit and hear her sing:
By that time will our book, I think, be drawn

Glend.: Do so;
And those musicians that shall play to you
Hang in the air a thousand leagues from hence,
And straight they shall be here: sit, and attend.

Hot.: Come, Kate, thou art perfect in lying down: come, quick, quick, that I may lay my head in thy lap.

Lady P.: Go, ye giddy goose. [*The music plays.*]

Hot.: Now I perceive the devil understands Welsh;
And 'tis no marvel he is so humorous.[13]
By'r lady, he is a good musician.

Lady P.: Then should you be nothing but musical, for you are altogether governed by humours. Lie still, ye thief, and hear the lady sing in Welsh.

Hot.: I had rather hear Lady, my brach,[14] howl in Irish.

Lady P.: Wouldst thou have thy head broken?

Hot.: No

Lady P.: Then be still.

Hot.: Neither; 'tis a woman's fault.

Lady P.: Now God help thee! What's that?

Hot.: Peace! she sings. [*Here the lady sings a Welsh song.*]

Hot.: Come, Kate, I'll have your song too.

Lady P.: Not mine, in good sooth.

Hot.: Not yours, in good sooth! Heart! you swear like a comfit-maker's[15] wife. "Not you, in good sooth," and "as true as I live," and "as God shall mend me," and "as sure as day."
And givest such sarcenet surety[16] for thy oaths,
As if thou never walk'st further than Finsbury.
Swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art,
A good mouth-filling oath, and leave "in sooth,"
And such protest of pepper-gingerbread,
To velvet-guards and Sunday-citizens.
Come, sing.

Lady P.: I will not sing.

Hot.: 'Tis the next way to turn tailor, or be red-breast teacher.[17] An the indentures be drawn, I'll away within these two hours; and so, come in when ye will [*Exit.*]

Glend.: Come, come, Lord Mortimer; you are as slow
As hot Lord Percy is on fire to go.
By this our book is drawn; we'll but seal, and then to horse immediately.

Mort. With all my heart [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE II—London The palace.]

[*Enter the King, Prince of Wales, and others.*]

King: Lords, give us leave, the Prince of Wales and I
Must have some private conference but be near at hand,
For we shall presently have need of you.
[*Exeunt Lords*]
I know not whether God will have it so,

[12] Luxurious. [13] Whimsical, capricious. [14] Bitch, named Lady.

[15] Confectioner's [16] Feeble surety—sarcenet was a light silk cloth [17] Tailors were noted for singing at their work

For some displeasing service I have done,
That, in his secret doom, out of my blood
He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me;
But thou dost in thy passages of life
Make me believe that thou art only mark'd
For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven
To punish my mistreadings. Tell me else,
Could such inordinate and low desires,
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,
Such barren pleasures, rude society,
As thou art match'd withal and grafted to,
Accompany the greatness of thy blood
And hold their level with thy princely heart?
Prince: So please your majesty, I would I could
Quit all offences with as clear excuse
As well as I am doubtless I can purge
Myself of many I am charged withal:
Yet such extenuation let me beg,
As, in reproof of many tales devised,
Which oft the ear of greatness needs must hear,
By smiling pick-thanks [1] and base news-mongers,
I may, for some things true, wherein my youth
Hath faulty wander'd and irregular,
Find pardon on my true submission.
King: God pardon thee! yet let me wonder, Harry,
At thy affections, which do hold a wing
Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors.
Thy place in council thou hast rudely lost,
Which by thy younger brother is supplied,
And art almost an alien to the hearts
Of all the court and princes of my blood:
The hope and expectation of thy time
Is ruin'd, and the soul of every man
Prophetically doth forethink thy fall.
Had I so lavish of my presence been,
So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
Had still kept loyal to possession
And left me in reputeless banishment,
A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.
By being seldom seen, I could not stir
But like a comet I was wonder'd at;
That men would tell their children "This is he";
Others would say "Where, which is Bolingbroke?"
And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,
And dress'd myself in such humility
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
Even in the presence of the crowned king.
Thus did I keep my person fresh and new;
My presence, like a robe pontifical,
Ne'er seen but wonder'd at: and so my state,
Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast
And wan [2] by rareness such solemnity.
The skipping king, he ambled up and down
With shallow jesters and rash bavin [3] wits,
Soon kindled and soon burnt; carded [4] his state,
Mingled his royalty with capering fools,
Had his great name profaned with their scorns
And gave his countenance, against his name,
To laugh at gibing boys and stand the push
Of every beardless vain comparative,
Grew a companion to the common streets,

[1] Tattling sycophants.

[2] Won. [3] Brush-wood faggots—wits as easily lighted and as soon burnt out as kindling wood. [4] Debased—to "card" was to adulterate by mixing.

Enfeoff'd himself to popularity;
That, being daily swallow'd by men's eyes,
They surfeited with honey and began
To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little
More than a little is by much too much.
So when he had occasion to be seen,
He was but as the cuckoo is in June,
Heard, not regarded; seen, but with such eyes
As, sick and blunted with community,[1]
Afford no extraordinary gaze,
Such as is bent on sun-like majesty
When it shines seldom in admiring eyes;
But rather drowsed and hung their eyelids down,
Slept in his face and render'd such aspect
As cloudy[2] men use to their adversaries,
Being with his presence glutted, gorged and full.
And in that very line, Harry, standest thou;
For thou hast lost thy princely privilege
With vile participation not an eye
But is a-weary of thy common sight,
Save mine, which hath desired to see thee more;
Which now doth that I would not have it do,
Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

Prince: I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,
Be more myself.

King: For all the world
As thou art to this hour was Richard then
When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh,
And even as I was then is Percy now
Now, by my sceptre and my soul to boot,
He hath more worthy interest to the state
Than thou the shadow of succession,
For of no right,[3] nor colour like to right,
He doth fill fields with harness in the realm,
Turns head against the lion's armed jaws,
And, being no more in debt to years than thou,
Leads ancient lords and reverend bishops on
To bloody battles and to bruising arms.
What never-dying honour hath he got
Against renowned Douglas! whose high deeds,
Whose hot incursions and great name in arms
Holds from all soldiers chief majority[4]
And military title capital
Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ:
Thrice hath this Hotspur, Mars in swathling clothes,
This infant warrior, in his enterprizes
Discomfited great Douglas, ta'en him once,
Enlarged him and made a friend of him,
To fill the mouth of deep defiance up
And shake the peace and safety of our throne
And what say you to this? Percy, Northumberland,
The Archbishop's grace of York, Douglas, Mortimer,
Capitulate against us[5] and are up.
But wherefore do I tell these news to thee?
Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,
Which art my near'st and dearest enemy?
Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,
Base inclination and the start of spleen,
To fight against me under Percy's pay,
To dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns,
To show how much thou art degenerate.

Prince: Do not think so, you shall not find it so
And God forgive them that so much have sway'd
Your majesty's good thoughts away from me!
I will redeem all this on Percy's head

[1] Familiarity. [2] Sullen. [3] For though without any legal right.

[4] Pre-eminence. [5] Draw up their grievances against us.

For some displeasing service I have done,
That, in his secret doom, out of my blood
He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me;
But thou dost in thy passages of life
Make me believe that thou art only mark'd
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Could such inordinate and low desires,
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As, sick and blunted with community,[4]
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Slept in his face and render'd such aspect
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To show how much thou art *degenerate.*
Prince: Do not think so, you shall not find it so:
And God forgive them that so much have sway'd
Your majesty's good thoughts away from me!
I will [illegible] all this on Percy's head

[4] Familiarity. [5] Sullen [6] For though without any legal right.

[7] [illegible]

And in the closing of some glorious day
Be bold to tell you that I am your son;
When I will wear a garment all of blood
And stain my favours[10] in a bloody mask,
Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame with it;
And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,
That this same child of honour and renown,
This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,
And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.
For every honour sitting on his helm,
Would they were multitudes, and on my head
My shames redoubled! for the time will come
That I shall make this northern youth exchange
His glorious deeds for my indignities.
Percy is but my factor,[11] good my lord,
To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf;
And I will call him to so strict account,
That he shall render every glory up,
Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,
Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.
This, in the name of God, I promise here:
The which if He be pleased I shall perform,
I do beseech your majesty may salve
The long-grown wounds of my intemperance:
If not, the end of life cancels all bands;
And I will die a hundred thousand deaths
Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow.
King: A hundred thousand rebels die in this:
Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein. [*Enter Blunt.*]
How now, good Blunt? thy looks are full of speed.
Blunt: So hath the business that I come to speak of.
Lord Mortimer of Scotland hath sent word
That Douglas and the English rebels met
The eleventh of this month at Shrewsbury:
A mighty and a fearful head they are,
If promises be kept on every hand,
As ever offer'd foul play in a state.
King: The Earl of Westmoreland set forth to-day;
With him my son, Lord John of Lancaster;
For this advertisement is five days old:
On Wednesday next, Harry, you shall set forward;
On Thursday we ourselves will march: our meeting
Is Bridgenorth: and, Harry, you shall march
Through Gloucestershire; by which account,
Our business valued, some twelve days hence
Our general forces at Bridgenorth shall meet.
Our hands are full of business: let's away;
Advantage feeds him fat, while men delay. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE III—Eastcheap. The Boar's-Head Tavern.]

[*Enter Falstaff and Bardolph.*]

Fal.: Bardolph, am I not fallen away vilely since this last action? do I not bate? do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an old lady's loose gown; I am withered like an old apple-john.[1] Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking; I shall be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse: the inside of a church! Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.

[10] Features. [11] Agent.

[1] A kind of apple, the skin of which shrivels in keeping.

Bard.: Sir John, you are so fretful, you cannot live long.

Fal.: Why, there is it: come sing me a song; make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be; virtuous enough; swore little, diced not above seven times a week; paid money that I borrowed, three or four times; lived well and in good compass: and now I live out of all order, out of all compass.

Bard.: Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass, out of all reasonable compass, Sir John.

Fal.: Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life: thou art our admiral,[2] thou bearest the lantern in the poop, but 'tis in the nose of thee; thou art the Knight of the Burning Lamp.

Bard.: Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.

Fal.: No, I'll be sworn; I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a Death's-head or a memento mori: I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire and Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be "By this fire, that's God's angel": but thou art altogether given over; and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou rannest up Gadshill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an ignis fatuus or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern: but the sack that thou hast drunk me would have bought me lights as good cheap at the dearest chandler's in Europe. I have maintained that salamander of yours with fire any time this two and thirty years; God reward me for it.

Bard.: 'Sblood, I would my face were in your belly!

Fal.: God-a-mercy! so should I be sure to be heart-burned. [*Enter Hostess.*] How now, Dame Partlet the hen! have you inquired yet who picked my pocket?

Host.: Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? do you think I keep thieves in my house? I have searched, I have inquired, so has my husband, man by man, boy by boy, servant by servant: the tithe of a hair was never lost in my house before.

Fal.: Ye lie, hostess: Bardolph was shaved and lost many a hair; and I'll be sworn my pocket was picked. Go to, you are a woman, go.

Host.: Who, I? no; I defy thee: God's light, I was never called so in mine own house before.

Fal.: Go to, I know you well enough.

Host.: No, Sir John; you do not know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir John: you owe me money, Sir John; and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it: I bought you a dozen of shirts to your back.

Fal.: Dowlas,[3] filthy dowlas: I have given them away to bakers' wives, and they have made bolters of them.

Host.: Now, as I am a true woman, holland[4] of eight shillings an ell. You owe money here besides, Sir John, for your diet and by-drinkings, and money lent you, four and twenty pound.

Fal.: He had his part of it, let him pay.

Host.: He? alas, he is poor, he hath nothing.

Fal.: How! poor? look upon his face, what call you rich? let them coin his nose, let them coin his cheeks: I'll not pay a denier. What, will you make a younker[5] of me? shall I not take mine ease in mine inn but I shall have my pocket picked? I have lost a seal-ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark.

Host.: O Jesu, I have heard the prince

[2] Admiral's ship, flagship

[3] A kind of coarse linen [4] Finely woven lawn [5] A greenhorn, a "sucker"

tell him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper!

Fal.: How! the prince is a Jack, a sneak-cup: 'sblood, an he were here, I would cudgel him like a dog, if he would say so. [*Enter the Prince and Peto, marching, and Falstaff meets them playing on his truncheon like a fife.*] How now, lad! is the wind in that door, i' faith? must we all march?

Bard.: Yea, two and two, Newgate fashion.[6]

Host.: My lord, I pray you, hear me.

Prince: What sayest thou, Mistress Quickly? How doth thy husband? I love him well; he is an honest man.

Host.: Good my lord, hear me.

Fal.: Prithee, let her alone, and list to me.

Prince: What sayest thou, Jack?

Fal.: The other night I fell asleep here behind the arras and had my pocket picked: this house is turned bawdy-house; they pick pockets.

Prince: What didst thou lose, Jack?

Fal.: Wilt thou believe me, Hal? three or four bonds of forty pound a-piece, and a seal-ring of my grand-father's.

Prince: A trifle, some eight-penny matter.

Host.: So I told him, my lord; and I said I heard your grace say so: and, my lord, he speaks most vilely of you, like a foul-mouthèd man as he is; and said he would cudgel you.

Prince: What! he did not?

Host.: There's neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in me else.

Fal.: There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune; nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox[7]; and for womanhood, Maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee. Go, you thing, go.

Host.: Say, what thing? what thing?

Fal.: What thing! why, a thing to thank God on.

[6] Like criminals conveyed to Newgate prison. [7] A fox drawn from his hole, trying to throw the dogs off his trail.

Host.: I am no thing to thank God on, I would thou shouldst know it; I am an honest man's wife: and, setting thy knighthood aside, thou art a knave to call me so.

Fal.: Setting thy womanhood aside, thou art a beast to say otherwise.

Host.: Say, what beast, thou knave, thou?

Fal.: What beast! why, an otter.

Prince: An otter, Sir John! why an otter?

Fal.: Why, she's neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not where to have her.

Host.: Thou art an unjust man in saying so: thou or any man knows where to have me, thou knave, thou!

Prince: Thou sayest true, hostess; and he slanders thee most grossly.

Host.: So he doth you, my lord; and said this other day you ought[8] him a thousand pound.

Prince: Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

Fal.: A thousand pound, Hal! a million: thy love is worth a million: thou owest me thy love.

Host.: Nay, my lord, he called you Jack, and said he would cudgel you.

Fal.: Did I, Bardolph?

Bard.: Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

Fal.: Yea, if he said my ring was copper.

Prince: I say 'tis copper: darest thou be as good as thy word now?

Fal.: Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art but man, I dare: but as thou art prince, I fear thee as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp.

Prince: And why not as the lion?

Fal.: The king himself is to be feared as the lion: dost thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? nay, an I do, I pray God my girdle break.

Prince: O, if it should, how would thy guts fall about thy knees! But, sirrah, there's no room for faith, truth, nor honesty in this bosom of thine; it is filled up with guts and midriff. Charge an

[8] Owed.

honest woman with picking thy pocket! why, thou impudent, embossed[*] rascal, if there were anything in thy pocket but tavern-reckonings, and one poor pennyworth of sugar-candy to make thee long-winded, if thy pocket were enriched with any other injuries but these, I am a villain: and yet you will stand to it; you will not pocket up wrong: art thou not ashamed?

Fal.: Dost thou hear, Hal? thou knowest in the state of innocency Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villainy? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty. You confess then, you picked my pocket?

Prince: It appears so by the story.

Fal.: Hostess, I forgive thee: go, make ready breakfast; love thy husband, look to thy servants, cherish thy guests: thou shalt find me tractable to any honest reason: thou seest I am pacified still. Nay, prithee, begone. [*Exit Hostess.*] Now, Hal, to the news at court: for the robbery, lad, how is that answered?

Prince: O, my sweet beef, I must still be good angel to thee: the money is paid back again.

Fal.: O, I do not like that paying back; 'tis a double labour.

Prince: I am good friends with my father and may do any thing.

Fal.: Rob me the exchequer the first thing thou doest, and do it with unwashed hands too.

Bard.: Do, my lord.

Prince: I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot.

Fal.: I would it had been of horse. Where shall I find one that can steal well? O for a fine thief, of the age of two and twenty or thereabouts! I am heinously unprovided. Well, God be thanked for these rebels, they offend none but the virtuous: I laud them, I praise them.

Prince: Bardolph!

Bard.: My lord?

Prince: Go bear this letter to Lord John of Lancaster, to my brother John; this to my Lord of Westmoreland. [*Exit Bard[olph].*] Go, Peto, to horse, to horse; for thou and I have thirty miles to ride yet ere dinner time. [*Exit Peto.*] Jack, meet me to-morrow in the Temple hall at two o'clock in the afternoon.

There shalt thou know thy charge; and there receive
Money and order for their furniture.
The land is burning; Percy stands on high;
And either we or they must lower lie.
[*Exit*]

Fal.: Rare words! brave world! Hostess, my breakfast, come!
O, I could wish this tavern were my drum! [*Exit*]

[*] Swollen

QUESTIONS ON ACT III

1. Scene i shows the rebels in apparent amity, settling the division of the kingdom among them. In what ways, however, has Shakespeare managed to indicate the essential lack of unity among the rebels?

2. Hotspur's teasing of Glendower parallels Falstaff's "ragging" of the oversolemn and dignified people of the court How does it differ from Falstaff's?

[illegible]

way, Hotspur is less realistic in his attitude toward the world than either of them?

4. Worcester's lecture to Hotspur (Sc. i, 177 ff.) furnishes a parallel to the lecture which the king reads to Hal in Scene ii. What effect is gained by the parallelism?

5. Scene ii is largely occupied with the king's sermon to Hal. Notice that the king shows some evidence of bad conscience at the way in which he won the crown (not by lineal descent but by deposing Richard II. See Shakespeare's play, *Richard II*). Notice that he reproves Hal for repeating the mistakes of Richard, who

carded his state,
Mingled his royalty with capering fools,
Had his great name profaned with their scorns, . . .

It is perhaps natural that the king, obsessed by the memory of the king whom he deposed, should see Hal's conduct as inviting the same kind of disaster. Yet is the king's speech really relevant? One hardly needs to know much about the character of Richard II to see that Prince Hal resembles him little, if at all. For example, is the impression which we get of Hal from the play that of a man who has lost his "princely privilege/With vile participation," a man who has made the populace weary of seeing him, as the king suggests? Or is he not rather a man who has given himself, in the opinion of the world, too exclusively to a clique of low associates?

6. Do not the king's speeches indicate that he is a man too much obsessed with what he takes to be his own narrow formula of success—namely, that he won out over Richard because he made himself strange and unfamiliar? Are not the king's own present difficulties the result, in part, of making himself too haughty and of standing too proudly on his own dignity? Hal does not make this criticism, to be sure. He has hardly earned the right to make any criticism of his father. But the fact that Shakespeare does not have him make it need not mean that Shakespeare does not intend us, as audience, to be cognizant of it.

7. It is ironic, however, that Prince Hal has already resolved on a course which involves an improvement on his father's advice. In Scene ii, 29–91, the latter tells his son not to be *like* Richard, who was

seen, but with such eyes
As, sick and blunted with community,
Afford no extraordinary gaze,
Such as is bent on sun-like majesty
When it shines seldom in admiring eyes. . . .

But, earlier (in I. ii, ll. 256 ff.) Hal had promised himself that he would "imitate the sun," which permits itself to be hidden by clouds only to burst forth in unexpected brilliance. He will, in short, not use a Richard for a foil but will employ as a foil his own former self. To sum up, is not Hal a better politician than his father, though his genuine delight in Falstaff may redeem him, for many readers, from the charge that he is what Percy calls his father, "a vile politician"?

8. Falstaff's exclamation, when told that the prince has procured him a

charge of foot, is: "Well, God be thanked for these rebels, they offend none but the virtuous: I laud them, I praise them." The comment, of course, primarily expresses his high spirits: that is, Falstaff is saying that it's an ill wind that blows nobody good; the rebels have at least been a cause of profit to him. Does not the statement, however, convey a hint of Falstaff's real attitude toward the state and toward matters of responsibility in general?

9. Here again, as in Act I, we see three different panels of action. Do we feel by now that these panels are closely enough related to give us a sense of essential unity in Act III? How does Act III advance the different phases of the action; that is, how does it fit into the structure of the play?

10. Does the fact that Hal settles up the robbery plot by having the stolen money repaid suggest to us anything about Hal's probable conduct with regard to the Percy plot?

ACT IV

[SCENE I—The rebel camp near Shrewsbury.]

[*Enter Hotspur, Worcester, and Douglas.*]

Hot.: Well said, my noble Scot: if speaking truth
In this fine age were not thought flattery,
Such attribution [1] should the Douglas have,
As not a soldier of this season's stamp
Should go so general current through the world.
By God, I cannot flatter; I do defy
The tongues of soothers; but a braver place
In my heart's love hath no man than yourself:
Nay, task me to my word; approve me, lord.

Doug.: Thou art the king of honour:
No man so potent breathes upon the ground
But I will beard him

Hot.: Do so, and 'tis well [*Enter a Messenger with letters.*]
What letters hast thou there?—I can but thank you.

Mess.: These letters come from your father.

Hot.: Letters from him! why comes he not himself?

Mess.: He cannot come, my lord; he is grievous sick.

Hot.: 'Zounds! how has he the leisure to be sick
In such a justling [2] time? Who leads his power?
Under whose government come they along?

Mess.: His letters bear his mind, not I, my lord.

Wor.: I prithee, tell me, doth he keep his bed?

Mess.: He did, my lord, four days ere I set forth;
And at the time of my departure thence
He was much fear'd by his physicians.

Wor.: I would the state of time had first been whole
Ere he by sickness had been visited:
His health was never better worth than now.

Hot.: Sick now! droop now! this sickness doth infect
The very life-blood of our enterprise,
'Tis catching hither, even to our camp
He writes me here, that inward sickness—

[1] Tribute, praise

[2] Jostling

t his friends by deputation could
t
n be drawn, nor did he think it
neet
y so dangerous and dear a trust
ny soul removed but on his own.
doth he give us bold advertisement,
t with our small conjunction we
should on,
see how fortune is disposed to us;
or, as he writes, there is no quailing
now,
Because the king is certainly possess'd
Of all our purposes. What say you to it?
Wor.: Your father's sickness is a maim
to us.
Hot.: A perilous gash, a very limb
lopp'd off:
And yet, in faith, it is not; his present
want
Seems more than we shall find it: were
it good
To set the exact wealth of all our states
All at one cast? to set so rich a main[3]
On the nice hazard of one doubtful hour?
It were not good; for therein should we
read
The very bottom and the soul of hope,
The very list, the very utmost bound
Of all our fortunes.
Doug.: 'Faith, and so we
should;
Where now remains a sweet reversion[4]:
We may boldly spend upon the hope of
what
Is to come in:
A comfort of retirement lives in this.
Hot.: A rendezvous, a home to fly
unto,
If that the devil and mischance look big
Upon the maidenhead of our affairs.
Wor.: But yet I would your father
had been here.
The quality and hair[5] of our attempt
Brooks no division: it will be thought
By some, that know not why he is away,
That wisdom, loyalty and mere dislike
Of our proceedings kept the earl from
hence:
And think how such an apprehension
May turn the tide of fearful faction
And breed a kind of question in our
cause;
For well you know we of the offering side
Must keep aloof from strict arbitrement,
And stop all sight-holes, every loop[6]
from whence
The eye of reason may pry in upon us:
This absence of your father's draws a
curtain,
That shows the ignorant a kind of fear
Before not dreamt of.
Hot.: You strain too
far.
I rather of his absence make this use:
It lends a lustre and more great opinion,
A larger dare to our great enterprise,
Than if the earl were here; for men must
think,
If we without his help can make a head
To push against a kingdom, with his
help
We shall o'erturn it topsy-turvy down.
Yet all goes well, yet all our joints are
whole.
Doug.: As heart can think: there is
not such a word
Spoke of in Scotland as this term of fear.
[*Enter Sir Richard Vernon.*]
Hot.: My cousin Vernon! welcome,
by my soul.
Ver.: Pray God my news be worth a
welcome, lord.
The Earl of Westmoreland, seven thou-
sand strong,
Is marching hitherwards; with him
Prince John.
Hot.: No harm: what more?
Ver.: And further, I have learn'
The king himself in person is set fort
Or hitherwards intended speedily,
With strong and mighty preparatior
Hot.: He shall be welcome too. W
is his son,
The nimble-footed madcap Prin
Wales,
And his comrades, that daff'd the
aside,
And bid it pass?

[3] Stake, wager. [4] Inheritance still to be realized. [5] Nature, character.

[6] Loophole.

Ver.: All furnish'd, all in arms;
All plumed like estridges[7] that with the wind
[illegible]

I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds,
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch[9] the world with noble horsemanship
Hot.: No more, no more. worse than the sun in March,
This praise doth nourish agues Let them come,
They come like sacrifices in their trim,
And to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war
All hot and bleeding will we offer them·
The mailed Mars shall on his altar sit
Up to the ears in blood I am on fire
To hear this rich reprisal is so nigh
And yet not ours Come, let me taste my horse,
Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt
Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales
Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,
Meet and ne'er part till one drop down a corse
O that Glendower were come!
Ver.: There is more news:
I learn'd in Worcester, as I rode along,
He cannot draw his power this fourteen days.
Doug.: That's the worst tidings that I hear of yet.
Wor.: Ay, by my faith, that bears a frosty sound.
Hot.· What may the king's whole battle reach unto?
Ver.: To thirty thousand.
Hot.: Forty let it be:
My father and Glendower being both away,
The powers of us may serve so great a day.
Come, let us take a muster speedily:
Doomsday is near; die all, die merrily.
Doug.: Talk not of dying: I am out of fear
Of death or death's hand for this one-half year. [*Exeunt.*]

[Scene II—A public road near Coventry.]

[*Enter Falstaff and Bardolph.*]

Fal.: Bardolph, get thee before to Coventry; fill me a bottle of sack: our soldiers shall march through, we'll to Sutton Co'fil' to-night

Bard · Will you give me money, captain?

Fal · Lay out, lay out

Bard. This bottle makes an angel.

Fal.: An if it do, take it for thy labour, and if it make twenty, take them all; I'll answer the coinage. Bid my lieutenant Peto meet me at town's end

Bard. I will, captain farewell [*Exit.*]

Fal. If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a soused gurnet.[1] I have misused the king's press[2] damnably. I have [illegible]

yeomen's sons; inquire me out contracted bachelors, such as had been asked twice on the banns, such a commodity of warm slaves, as had as lieve hear the devil as a drum; such as fear the report of a caliver[3] worse than a struck fowl or a hurt wild-duck. I pressed me none but such toasts-and-butter,[4] with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins' heads, and they have bought out their services, and now my whole charge consists of ancients,[5] corporals,

[7] Goshawks [8] Beat or fluttered their wings
[9] Charm, enchant

[1] Pickled fish [2] Commission to impress ("draft") soldiers [3] Musket. [4] Cf. Caspar Milquetoast [5] Ensigns.

...rts, gentlemen of companies, ...s ragged as Lazarus in the cloth, where the glutton's dogs ...is sores; and such as indeed were soldiers, but discarded unjust ...g-men, younger sons to younger ...ers, revolted tapsters and ostlers ...-fallen, the cankers of a calm ...l and a long peace, ten times more ...onourable ragged than an old faced ...ent: and such have I, to fill up the ...ms of them that have bought out ...eir services, that you would think that had a hundred and fifty tattered ...odigals lately come from swine-keep-...g, from eating draff and husks. A mad ...ellow met me on the way and told me I ...ad unloaded all the gibbets and pressed the dead bodies. No eye hath seen such scarecrows. I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat: nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had gyves[6] on; for indeed I had the most of them out of prison. There's but a shirt and a half in all my company; and the half shirt is two nap-kins tacked together and thrown over the shoulders like an herald's coat with-out sleeves; and the shirt, to say the truth, stolen from my host at Saint Alban's, or the red-nose innkeeper of Daventry. But that's all one; they'll
find linen enough on every hedge. [*Enter* 65
the Prince and Westmoreland.]

Prince: How now, blown Jack! how now, quilt!

Fal.: What, Hal! how now, mad wag! what a devil dost thou in Warwickshire? My good Lord of Westmoreland, I cry
you mercy: I thought your honour had 72
already been at Shrewsbury.

West.: Faith, Sir John, 'tis more than time that I were there, and you too; but my powers are there already. The
king, I can tell you, looks for us all: we 77
must away all night.

Fal.: Tut, never fear me: I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.

Prince: I think, to steal cream in-deed, for thy theft hath already made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, whose
fellows are these that come after? 83

Fal.: Mine, Hal, mine.

Prince: I did never see such pitiful rascals.

Fal.: Tut, tut; good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder; they'll
fill a pit as well as better: tush, man, 90
mortal men, mortal men.

West.: Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and bare, too beggarly.

Fal.: 'Faith, for their poverty, I know not where they had that; and for their
bareness, I am sure they never learned 97
that of me.

Prince: No, I'll be sworn; unless you call three fingers on the ribs bare.[7] But, sirrah, make haste: Percy is already in
the field. 101

Fal.: What, is the king encamped?

West.: He is, Sir John: I fear we shall stay too long.

Fal.: Well,
To the latter end of a fray and the be- 105
ginning of a feast
Fits a dull fighter and a keen guest. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE III—The rebel camp near Shrewsbury.]

[*Enter Hotspur, Worcester, Douglas, and Vernon.*]

Hot.: We'll fight with him to-night.
Wor.: It may not be.
Doug.: You give him then advantage.
Ver.: Not a whit.
Hot.: Why say you so? looks he not for supply?
Ver.: So do we.
Hot.: His is certain, ours is doubtful.
Wor.: Good cousin, be advised; stir not to-night.
Ver.: Do not, my lord.
Doug.: You do no... counsel well:
You speak it out of fear and cold hear...

6 Fetters.

7 Fat three finger-widths thick.

Ver.: Do me no slander, Douglas: by my life,
And I dare well maintain it with my life,
If well-respected honour bid me on,
I hold as little counsel with weak fear
As you, my lord, or any Scot that this day lives:
Let it be seen to-morrow in the battle
Which of us fears
Doug.: Yea, or to-night.
Ver.: Content.
Hot.: To-night, say I.
Ver.: Come, come, it may not be I wonder much,
Being men of such great leading as you are,
That you foresee not what impediments
Drag back our expedition: certain horse
Of my cousin Vernon's are not yet come up.
Your uncle Worcester's horse came but to-day;
And now their pride and mettle is asleep,
Their courage with hard labour tame and dull,
That not a horse is half the half of himself.
Hot : So are the horses of the enemy
In general, journey-bated and brought low
The better part of ours are full of rest.
Wor.: The number of the king exceedeth ours:
For God's sake, cousin, stay till all come in. [*The trumpet sounds a parley*]
[*Enter Sir Walter Blunt*]
Blunt: I come with gracious offers from the king,
If you vouchsafe me hearing and respect.
Hot.: Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt; and would to God
You were of our determination!
Some of us love you well; and even those some
Envy your great deservings and good name,
Because you are not of our quality,
But stand against us like an enemy
Blunt: And God defend but still I should stand so,
So long as out of limit and true rule
You stand against anointed majesty.
But to my charge. The king hath sent to know
The nature of your griefs, and whereupon
You conjure from the breast of civil peace
Such bold hostility, teaching his duteous land
Audacious cruelty. If that the king
Have any way your good deserts forgot,
Which he confesseth to be manifold,
He bids you name your griefs; and with all speed
You shall have your desires with interest
And pardon absolute for yourself and these
Herein misled by your suggestion.
Hot : The king is kind; and well we know the king
Knows at what time to promise, when to pay
My father and my uncle and myself
Did give him that same royalty he wears;
And when he was not six and twenty strong,
Sick in the world's regard, wretched and low,
A poor unminded outlaw sneaking home,
My father gave him welcome to the shore;
And when he heard him swear and vow to God
He came but to be Duke of Lancaster,
To sue his livery [1] and beg his peace,
With tears of innocency and terms of zeal,
My father, in kind heart and pity moved,
Swore him assistance and perform'd it too.
Now when the lords and barons of the realm
Perceived Northumberland did lean to him,

[1] Sue for the delivery of his inheritance

The more and less came in with cap and knee [2]
Met him in boroughs, cities, villages,
Attended him on bridges, stood in lanes,
Laid gifts before him, proffer'd him their oaths,
Gave him their heirs as pages; follow'd him
Even at the heels in golden multitudes.
He presently, as greatness knows itself,
Steps me a little higher than his vow
Made to my father, while his blood was poor,
Upon the naked shore at Ravenspurgh;
And now, forsooth, takes on him to reform
Some certain edicts and some strait decrees
That lie too heavy on the commonwealth,
Cries out upon abuses, seems to weep
Over his country's wrongs; and by this face,
This seeming brow of justice, did he win
The hearts of all that he did angle for;
Proceeded further; cut me off the heads
Of all the favourites that the absent king
In deputation left behind him here,
When he was personal [3] in the Irish war.
Blunt: Tut, I came not to hear this.
Hot.: Then to the point.
In short time after, he deposed the king;
Soon after that, deprived him of his life;
And in the neck of that,[4] task'd [5] the whole state;
To make that worse, suffer'd his kinsman March,
Who is, if every owner were well placed,
Indeed his king, to be engaged in Wales,
There without ransom to lie forfeited;
Disgraced me in my happy victories,
Sought to entrap me by intelligence;
Rated mine uncle from the council-board;
In rage dismiss'd my father from the court;
Broke oath on oath, committed wrong on wrong,

[2] Cap in hand, kneeling. [3] Present in person. [4] Immediately after that. [5] Taxed.

And in conclusion drove us to seek out
This head of safety; and withal to pry
Into his title, the which we find
Too indirect for long continuance.
Blunt: Shall I return this answer to the king?
Hot.: Not so, Sir Walter: we'll withdraw awhile.
Go to the king; and let there be impawn'd
Some surety for a safe return again,
And in the morning early shall my uncle
Bring him our purposes; and so farewell.
Blunt: I would you would accept of grace and love.
Hot.: And may be so we shall.
Blunt: Pray God you do.
[*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE IV—York. The Archbishop's palace.]

[*Enter the Archbishop of York and Sir Michael.*]

Arch.: Hie, good Sir Michael; bear this sealed brief
With winged haste to the lord marshal;
This to my cousin Scroop, and all the rest
To whom they are directed. If you knew
How much they do import, you would make haste.
Sir M.: My good lord,
I guess their tenour.
Arch.: Like enough you do.
To-morrow, good Sir Michael, is a day
Wherein the fortune of ten thousand men
Must bide the touch [1]; for, sir, at Shrewsbury,
As I am truly given to understand,
The king with mighty and quick-raised power
Meets with Lord Harry: and, I fear, Sir Michael,
What with the sickness of Northumberland,
Whose power was in the first proportion,
And what with Owen Glendower's absence thence,

[1] Must be put to the test.

Who with them was a rated sinew too
And comes not in, o'er-ruled by prophecies,
I fear the power of Percy is too weak
To wage an instant trial with the king.
Sir M.: Why, my good lord, you need not fear;
There is Douglas and Lord Mortimer.
Arch: No, Mortimer is not there.
Sir M.: But there is Mordake, Vernon, Lord Harry Percy,
And there is my Lord of Worcester and a head
Of gallant warriors, noble gentlemen.
Arch.: And so there is: but yet the [illegible]
[illegible]
caster,
The noble Westmoreland and warlike Blunt;
And many moe[1] corrivals and dear men
Of estimation and command in arms.
Sir M.: Doubt not, my lord, they shall be well opposed.
Arch.: I hope no less, yet needful 'tis to fear;
And, to prevent the worst, Sir Michael, speed:
For if Lord Percy thrive not, ere the king
Dismiss his power, he means to visit us,
For he hath heard of our confederacy.
And 'tis but wisdom to make strong against him:
Therefore make haste. I must go write again
To other friends; and so farewell, Sir Michael. [*Exeunt.*]

[1] More.

QUESTIONS ON ACT IV

1. Is it in character for Percy Hotspur to suggest that perhaps the rebels will accept the king's terms? One remembers that throughout this act each piece of bad news which the rebels receive only spurs on his resolution to stand and fight the king. He argues that there will be the more glory if they can defeat the king without the aid of Northumberland and of Glendower. Why does Shakespeare have him reply to Blunt's

I would you would accept of grace and love

with "And may be so we shall"? Shakespeare goes further than this: in the next act he has Worcester refuse to tell Hotspur of the king's later offer of pardon for fear that he will accept it. Is the point this: that Percy, if he must fight, will welcome a turning of the odds against him as making his conduct more glorious; but that, on the other hand, he will be easily touched by any show of chivalry on the part of the king, his "liberal and kind offer" as Worcester terms it? In other words, is the mainspring of Hotspur's character a desire for "honor" or a desire for power? Does Hotspur want an apology from the king which will satisfy his honor, or does he want the political power which overthrowing the king will give him?

2. Is the defection of Northumberland and Glendower adequately motivated?

3. What is the structural function of Act IV?

ACT V

[SCENE I—The King's camp near Shrewsbury.]

[*Enter the King, Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster, Sir Walter Blunt, and Falstaff.*]

King: How bloodily the sun begins to peer
Above yon busky[1] hill! the day looks pale
At his distemperature.
Prince: The southern wind
Doth play the trumpet to his purposes,
And by his hollow whistling in the leaves
Foretells a tempest and a blustering day.
King: Then with the losers let it sympathise,
For nothing can seem foul to those that win [*The trumpet sounds.*]
[*Enter Worcester and Vernon.*]
How now, my lord of Worcester! 'tis not well
That you and I should meet upon such terms
As now we meet. You have deceived our trust
And made us doff our easy robes of peace,
To crush our old limbs in ungentle steel:
This is not well, my lord, this is not well.
What say you to it? will you again unknit
This churlish knot of all-abhorred war?
And move in that obedient orb again
Where you did give a fair and natural light,
And be no more an exhaled meteor,
A prodigy of fear and a portent
Of broached mischief to the unborn times?
Wor.: Hear me, my liege:
For mine own part, I could be well content
To entertain the lag-end of my life
With quiet hours; for I do protest,
I have not sought the day of this dislike.
King: You have not sought it! how comes it, then?
Fal.: Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.
Prince: Peace, chewet,[2] peace!
Wor.: It pleased your majesty to turn your looks
Of favour from myself and all our house;
And yet I must remember you, my lord,
We were the first and dearest of your friends.
For you my staff of office did I break
In Richard's time; and posted day and night
To meet you on the way, and kiss your hand,
When yet you were in place and in account
Nothing so strong and fortunate as I.
It was myself, my brother and his son,
That brought you home and boldly did outdare
The dangers of the time. You swore to us,
And you did swear that oath at Doncaster,
That you did nothing purpose 'gainst the state;
Nor claim no further than your new-fall'n right,[3]
The seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster:
To this we swore our aid. But in short space
It rain'd down fortune showering on your head;
And such a flood of greatness fell on you,
What with our help, what with the absent king,
What with the injuries of a wanton time,
The seeming sufferances that you had borne,
And the contrarious winds that held the king
So long in his unlucky Irish wars
That all in England did repute him dead:
And from this swarm of fair advantages
You took occasion to be quickly woo'd

[1] Bushy.

[2] Chough, a chattering bird. [3] A right newly fallen due.

To gripe the general sway into your hand;
Forgot your oath to us at Doncaster;
And being fed by us you used us so
As that ungentle gull,[4] the cuckoo's bird,
Useth the sparrow; did oppress our nest;
Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk
That even our love durst not come near your sight
For fear of swallowing; but with nimble wing
We were enforced, for safety sake, to fly
Out of your sight and raise this present head;
Whereby we stand opposed by such means
As you yourself have forged against yourself
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
And violation of all faith and troth
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.

King· These things indeed you have articulate,
Proclaim'd at market-crosses, read in churches,
To face[5] the garment of rebellion
With some fine colour that may please the eye
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
Of hurlyburly innovation:
And never yet did insurrection want
Such water-colours to impaint his cause;
Nor moody beggars, starving for a time
Of pellmell havoc and confusion.

Prince: In both your armies there is many a soul
Shall pay full dearly for this encounter,
If once they join in trial. Tell your nephew,
The Prince of Wales doth join with all the world
In praise of Henry Percy: by my hopes,
This present enterprise set off his head,
I do not think a braver gentleman,
More active-valiant or more valiant-young,
More daring or more bold, is now alive
To grace this latter age with noble deeds.
For my part, I may speak it to my shame
I have a truant been to chivalry;
And so I hear he doth account me too;
Yet this before my father's majesty—
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Try fortune with him in a single fight.

King· And, Prince of Wales, so dare we venture thee,
Albeit considerations infinite
Do make against it. No, good Worcester, no,
We love our people well; even those we love
That are misled upon your cousin's part;
And, will they take the offer of our grace,
Both he and they and you, yea, every man
Shall be my friend again and I'll be his:
So tell your cousin, and bring me word
What he will do: but if he will not yield,
Rebuke and dread correction wait on us
And they shall do their office. So, be gone;
We will not now be troubled with reply:
We offer fair; take it advisedly.

[*Exeunt Worcester and Vernon.*]

Prince. It will not be accepted, on my life:
The Douglas and the Hotspur both together
Are confident against the world in arms.

King: Hence, therefore, every leader to his charge;
For, on their answer, will we set on them:
And God befriend us, as our cause is just!

[*Exeunt all but the Prince of Wales and Falstaff*]

Fal.: Hal, if thou see me down in the battle and bestride me,[6] so, 'tis a point of friendship.

Prince· Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friendship Say thy prayers, and farewell.

[4] Nestling. [5] Trim

[6] Stand over and defend me

would 'twere bed-time, Hal,
ell.
: Why, thou owest God a
Exit.]

'Tis not due yet; I would be o pay him before his day. What be so forward with him that calls n me? Well, 'tis no matter; honour s me on. Yea, but how if honour x me off when I come on? how then? honour set to a leg? no: or an arm? or take away the grief of a wound? . Honour hath no skill in surgery, en? no. What is honour? a word. What is that in that word honour? what is that honour? air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? he that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? no. Doth he hear it? no. 'Tis insensible, then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? no. Why? detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon: and so ends my catechism. [*Exit.*]

[SCENE II—The rebel camp.]

[*Enter Worcester and Vernon.*]

Wor.: O, no, my nephew must not
know, Sir Richard,
The liberal and kind offer of the king.
Ver.: 'Twere best he did.
Wor.: Then are we all undone.
It is not possible, it cannot be,
The king should keep his word in loving
us;
He will suspect us still and find a time
To punish this offence in other faults:
Suspicion all our lives shall be stuck full
of eyes;
For treason is but trusted like the fox,
Who, ne'er so tame, so cherish'd and
lock'd up,
Will have a wild trick of his ancestors,
Look how we can, or sad or merrily,
Interpretation will misquote our looks,
And we shall feed like oxen at a stall,
The better cherish'd, still the nearer
death.
My nephew's trespass may be well forgot;
It hath the excuse of youth and heat of
blood,
And an adopted name of privilege,
A hare-brain'd Hotspur, govern'd by a
spleen:
All his offences live upon my head
And on his father's; we did train him on,
And, his corruption being ta'en from us,
We, as the spring of all, shall pay for all.
Therefore, good cousin, let not Harry
know,
In any case, the offer of the king.
Ver.: Deliver what you will; I'll say
'tis so.
Here comes your cousin.
[*Enter Hotspur and Douglas.*]
Hot.: My uncle is return'd:
Deliver up my Lord of Westmoreland.
Uncle, what news?
Wor.: The king will bid you battle
presently.
Doug.: Defy him by the Lord of Westmoreland.
Hot.: Lord Douglas, go you and tell
him so.
Doug.: Marry, and shall, and very
willingly. [*Exit.*]
Wor.: There is no seeming mercy in
the king.
Hot.: Did you beg any? God forbid!
Wor.: I told him gently of our grievances,
Of his oath-breaking; which he mended
thus,
By now forswearing that he is forsworn:
He calls us rebels, traitors; and will
scourge
With haughty arms this hateful name in
us.
[*Re-enter Douglas.*]
Doug.: Arm, gentlemen; to arms! for
I have thrown
A brave defiance in King Henry's teet
And Westmoreland, that was engage
did bear it;
Which cannot choose but bring
quickly on.
Wor.: The Prince of Wales ste
forth before the king,
And, nephew, challenged you to
fight.

Hot.: O, would the quarrel lay upon our heads,
And that no man might draw short breath to-day
But I and Harry Monmouth! Tell me, tell me,
How show'd his tasking? seem'd it in contempt?
Ver.: No, by my soul; I never in my life
Did hear a challenge urged more modestly,
Unless a brother should a brother dare
To gentle exercise and proof of arms
He gave you all the duties of a man:
Trimm'd up your praises with a princely tongue,
Spoke your deservings like a chronicle,
Making you ever better than his praise
By still dispraising praise valued with you;
And, which became him like a prince indeed,
He made a blushing cital [1] of himself;
And chid his truant youth with such a grace
As if he master'd there a double spirit
Of teaching and of learning instantly.
There did he pause. but let me tell the world,
If he outlive the envy of this day,
England did never owe so sweet a hope,
So much misconstrued in his wantonness.
Hot.: Cousin, I think thou art enamoured
On his follies: never did I hear
Of any prince so wild a libertine
But be he as he will, yet once ere night
I will embrace him with a soldier's arm,
That he shall shrink under my courtesy
Arm, arm with speed: and, fellows, soldiers, friends,
Better consider what you have to do
Than I, that have not well the gift of tongue,
Can lift your blood up with persuasion
[*Enter a Messenger.*]
Mess.: My lord, here are letters for you

[1] Recital, statement.

Hot.: I cannot read them now.
O gentlemen, the time of life is short!
To spend that shortness basely were too long,
If life did ride upon a dial's point,
[illegible]
[illegible]
with us!
Now, for our consciences, the arms are fair,
When the intent of bearing them is just.
[*Enter another Messenger.*]
Mess.: My lord, prepare; the king comes on apace.
Hot.. I thank him, that he cuts me from my tale,
For I profess not talking; only this—
Let each man do his best. and here draw I
A sword, whose temper I intend to stain
With the best blood that I can meet withal
In the adventure of this perilous day
Now, Esperance! Percy! and set on.
Sound all the lofty instruments of war,
And by that music let us all embrace;
For, heaven to earth, some of us never shall
A second time do such a courtesy.
[*The trumpets sound. They embrace and exeunt*]

[SCENE III—Plain between the camps.]

[*The King enters with his power. Alarum to the battle Then enter Douglas and Sir Walter Blunt*]

Blunt What is thy name, that in the battle thus
Thou crossest me? what honour dost thou seek
Upon my head?
Doug · Know then, my name is Douglas,
And I do haunt thee in the battle thus
Because some tell me that thou art a king
Blunt: They tell thee true.
Doug . The Lord of Stafford dear to-day hath bought

ess, for instead of thee, King
y,
rd hath ended him: so shall it
,
ou yield thee as my prisoner.
: I was not born a yielder, thou
oud Scot;
ou shalt find a king that will re-
enge
Stafford's death.
[*They fight. Douglas kills Blunt.*]
[*Enter Hotspur.*]
ot.: O Douglas, hadst thou fought at
Holmedon thus,
ver had triumph'd upon a Scot.
Doug.: All's done, all's won; here
breathless lies the king.
Hot.: Where?
Doug.: Here.
Hot.: This, Douglas? no: I know this
face full well:
A gallant knight he was, his name was
Blunt;
Semblably furnish'd [1] like the king him-
self.
Doug.: A fool go with thy soul,
whither it goes!
A borrow'd title hast thou bought too
dear:
Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a
king?
Hot.: The king hath many marching
in his coats.
Doug.: Now, by my sword, I will kill
all his coats;
I'll murder all his wardrobe, piece by
piece,
Until I meet the king.
Hot.: Up, and away!
Our soldiers stand full fairly for the day.
[*Exeunt.*]

[*Alarum. Enter Falstaff, solus.*]

Fal.: Though I could 'scape shot-free [2] at London, I fear the shot here; here's no scoring but upon the pate. Soft! who are you? Sir Walter Blunt: there's honour for you! here's no vanity! I am as hot as molten lead, and as heavy too: God keep lead out of me! I need no more weight than mine own bowels. I have led my ragamuffins where they are peppered: there's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive; and they are for the town's end, to beg during life. But who comes here? [*Enter the Prince.*]

Prince: What, stand'st thou idle here?
lend me thy sword:
Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff
Under the hoofs of vaunting enemies,
Whose deaths are yet unrevenged: I
prithee, lend me thy sword.

Fal.: O Hal, I prithee, give me leave to breathe awhile. Turk Gregory never did such deeds in arms as I have done this day. I have paid Percy, I have made him sure.

Prince: He is, indeed; and living to kill thee. I prithee, lend me thy sword.

Fal.: Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive, thou get'st not my sword; but take my pistol, if thou wilt.

Prince: Give it me: what, is it in the case?

Fal.: Ay, Hal; 'tis hot, 'tis hot; there's that will sack a city. [*The Prince draws it out, and finds it to be a bottle of sack.*]

Prince: What, is it a time to jest and dally now? [*He throws the bottle at him. Exit.*]

Fal.: Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him. If he do come in my way, so: if he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make a carbonado [3] of me. I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath: give me life: which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlooked for, and there's an end. [*Exit.*]

[SCENE IV—Another part of the field.]

[*Alarum. Excursions. Enter the King, the Prince, Lord John of Lancaster, and Earl of Westmoreland.*]

King: I prithee,
Harry, withdraw thyself; thou bleed'st
too much.

[1] Resembling in arms and equipment. [2] A pun on *shot* in the sense of "bullet" and of "tavern-reckoning" or score.

[3] Meat scored across and broiled.

Lord John of Lancaster, go you with him.
Lan.: Not I, my lord, unless I did bleed too.
Prince: I beseech your majesty, make up,
Lest your retirement do amaze your friends.
King: I will do so
My Lord of Westmoreland, lead him to his tent.
West.: Come, my lord, I'll lead you to your tent.
Prince: Lead me, my lord? I do not need your help:
And God forbid a shallow scratch should drive
The Prince of Wales from such a field as this,
Where stain'd nobility lies trodden on,
And rebels' arms triumph in massacres!
Lan.: We breathe too long: come, cousin Westmoreland,
Our duty this way lies; for God's sake, come.
[*Exeunt Prince John and Westmoreland.*]
Prince: By God, thou has deceived me, Lancaster;
I did not think thee lord of such a spirit:
Before, I loved thee as a brother, John;
But now, I do respect thee as my soul.
King: I saw him hold Lord Percy at the point
With lustier maintenance[1] than I did look for
Of such an ungrown warrior.
Prince: O, this boy
Lends mettle to us all! [*Exit.*]
[*Enter Douglas.*]
Doug.: Another king! they grow like Hydra's heads:
I am the Douglas, fatal to all those
That wear those colours on them: what art thou,
That counterfeit'st the person of a king?
King: The king himself; who, Douglas, grieves at heart
So many of his shadows thou hast met
And not the very king. I have two boys
Seek Percy and thyself about the field:
But, seeing thou fall'st on me so luckily,
I will assay thee: so, defend thyself.
Doug.: I fear thou art another counterfeit;
And yet, in faith, thou bear'st thee like a king:
But mine I am sure thou art, whoe'er thou be,
And thus I win thee.
[*They fight; the King being in danger, re-enter Prince of Wales.*]
Prince: Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou art like
Never to hold it up again! the spirits
Of valiant Shirley, Stafford, Blunt, are in my arms·
It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee;
Who never promiseth but he means to pay. [*They fight: Douglas flies.*]
Cheerly, my lord: how fares your grace?
Sir Nicholas Gawsey hath for succour sent,
And so hath Clifton: I'll to Clifton straight
King: Stay, and breathe awhile:
Thou has redeem'd thy lost opinion,
And show'd thou makest some tender of[2] my life,
In this fair rescue thou hast brought to me.
Prince: O God! they did me too much injury
That ever said I hearken'd for your death.
If it were so, I might have let alone
The insulting hand of Douglas over you,
Which would have been as speedy in your end
As all the poisonous potions in the world
And saved the treacherous labour of your son
King: Make up to Clifton I'll to Sir Nicholas Gawsey [*Exit.*]
[*Enter Hotspur.*]
Hot.: If I mistake not, thou art Harry Monmouth.

[1] Endurance

[2] Thou hast some *regard for*

Prince: Thou speak'st as if I would deny my name.
Hot.: My name is Harry Percy.
Prince: Why, then I see
A very valiant rebel of the name.
I am the Prince of Wales; and think not, Percy,
To share with me in glory any more:
Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere;
Nor can one England brook a double reign,
Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales.
Hot.: Nor shall it, Harry; for the hour is come
To end the one of us; and would to God
Thy name in arms were now as great as mine!
Prince: I'll make it greater ere I part from thee;
And all the budding honours on thy crest
I'll crop, to make a garland for my head.
Hot.: I can no longer brook thy vanities. [*They fight.*]

[*Enter Falstaff.*]

Fal.: Well said, Hal! to it, Hal! Nay, you shall find no boy's play here, I can tell you. [*Re-enter Douglas; he fights with Falstaff, who falls down as if he were dead, and exit Douglas. Hotspur is wounded, and falls.*]

Hot.: O, Harry, thou hast robb'd me of my youth!
I better brook the loss of brittle life
Than those proud titles thou hast won of me;
They wound my thoughts worse than thy sword my flesh:
But thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool;
And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop. O, I could prophesy,
But that the earthy and cold hand of death
Lies on my tongue: no, Percy, thou art dust,
And food for— [*Dies.*]
Prince: For worms, brave Percy: fare thee well, great heart!
Ill-weaved ambition, how much art thou shrunk!
When that this body did contain a spirit,
A kingdom for it was too small a bound;
But now two paces of the vilest earth
Is room enough: this earth that bears thee dead
Bears not alive so stout a gentleman.
If thou wert sensible of courtesy,
I should not make so dear a show of zeal:
But let my favours hide thy mangled face;
And, even in thy behalf, I'll thank myself
For doing these fair rites of tenderness.
Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to heaven!
Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave,
But not remember'd in thy epitaph!
[*He spieth Falstaff on the ground.*]
What, old acquaintance! could not all this flesh
Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell!
I could have better spared a better man:
O, I should have a heavy miss of thee,
If I were much in love with vanity!
Death hath not struck so fat a deer to-day,
Though many dearer, in this bloody fray.
Embowell'd [3] will I see thee by and by:
Till then in blood by noble Percy lie.
[*Exit.*]

Fal.: [*Rising up.*] Embowelled! if thou embowel me to-day, I'll give you leave to powder me and eat me to-morrow. 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant [4] Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit: to die, is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man: but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valour

[3] As a preparation for embalming. [4] Furious like the supposed deity of the Saracens, Termagant.

is discretion; in the which better part I have saved my life. 'Zounds, I am afraid of this gunpowder Percy, though he be dead: how, if he should counterfeit too and rise? by my faith, I am afraid he would prove the better counterfeit. Therefore I'll make him sure; yea, and I'll swear I killed him. Why may not he rise as well as I? Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me. Therefore, sirrah [*stabbing him*], with a new wound in your thigh, come you along with me. [*Takes up Hotspur on his back.*] [*Re-enter the Prince of Wales and Lord John of Lancaster.*]

Prince: Come, brother John; full bravely hast thou flesh'd
Thy maiden sword.

Lan.: But, soft! whom have we here?
Did you not tell me this fat man was dead?

Prince: I did; I saw him dead,
Breathless and bleeding on the ground. Art thou alive?
Or is it fantasy that plays upon our eyesight?
I prithee, speak; we will not trust our eyes
Without our ears: thou art not what thou seem'st.

Fal.: No, that's certain; I am not a double man: but if I be not Jack Falstaff, then am I a Jack. There is Percy [*throwing the body down*]. if your father will do me any honour, so; if not, let him kill the next Percy himself. I look to be either earl or duke, I can assure you.

Prince: Why, Percy I killed myself and saw thee dead.

Fal.: Didst thou? Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying! I grant you I was down and out of breath; and so was he: but we rose both at an instant and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. If I may be believed, so, if not, let them that should reward valour bear the sin upon their own heads. I'll take it upon my death, I gave him this wound in the thigh: if the man were alive and would deny it, 'zounds, I would make him eat a piece of my sword.

Lan.: This is the strangest tale that ever I heard.

Prince: This is the strangest fellow, brother John.
Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back:
For my part, if a lie may do thee grace,
I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.- [*A retreat is sounded.*]
The trumpet sounds retreat; the day is ours.
Come, brother, let us to the highest of the field,
To see what friends are living, who are dead.

[*Exeunt Prince of Wales and Lancaster.*]

Fal.: I'll follow, as they say, for reward. He that rewards me, God reward him! If I do grow great, I'll grow less; for I'll purge, and leave sack, and live cleanly as a nobleman should do. [*Exit.*]

[SCENE V—Another part of the field.]

[*The trumpets sound Enter the King, Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster, Earl of Westmoreland, with Worcester and Vernon prisoners.*]

King: Thus ever did rebellion find rebuke.
Ill-spirited Worcester! did not we send grace,
Pardon and terms of love to all of you?
And wouldst thou turn our offers contrary?
Misuse the tenour of thy kinsman's trust?
Three knights upon our party slain to-day,
A noble earl and many a creature else
Had been alive this hour,
If like a Christian thou hadst truly borne
Betwixt our armies true intelligence.

Wor. What I have done my safety urged me to;
And I embrace this fortune patiently,
Since not to be avoided it falls on me.

King: Bear Worcester to the death and Vernon too:
Other offenders we will pause upon.
[*Exeunt Worcester and Vernon guarded.*]
How goes the field?
Prince: The noble Scot, Lord Douglas, when he saw
The fortune of the day quite turn'd from him,
The noble Percy slain, and all his men
Upon the foot of fear, fled with the rest;
And falling from a hill, he was so bruised
That the pursuers took him. At my tent
The Douglas is; and I beseech your grace
I may dispose of him.
King: With all my heart.
Prince: Then, brother John of Lancaster, to you
This honourable bounty shall belong:
Go to the Douglas, and deliver him
Up to his pleasure, ransomless and free:
His valour shown upon our crests to-day
Hath taught us how to cherish such high deeds
Even in the bosom of our adversaries.
Lan.: I thank your grace for this high courtesy,
Which I shall give away immediately.
King: Then this remains, that we divide our power.
You, son John, and my cousin Westmoreland
Towards York shall bend you with your dearest speed,
To meet Northumberland and the prelate Scroop,
Who, as we hear, are busily in arms:
Myself and you, son Harry, will towards Wales,
To fight with Glendower and the Earl of March.
Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway,
Meeting the check of such another day:
And since this business so fair is done,
Let us not leave till all our own be won.
[*Exeunt.*]

NOTES ON *HENRY IV, PART I*

1. THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

As was pointed out earlier, the salient problem in this play must be the problem of unity. To most readers at least, the most important general question which presents itself is this: does the play achieve a real dramatic unity, or is it, after all, merely a not-too-interesting "history" play to which Shakespeare has added, in the interest of amusement, the Falstaff tavern scenes? To state the problem with special reference to Act V, does this last act really succeed in uniting the various threads of interest that run through the play?

The "history" plot is, of course, brought to a conclusion in this act with the decision gained in the Battle of Shrewsbury.* But what of the comic underplot? Does it come here into any organic relation with the other elements of the play, or does it remain isolated? What happens to Hotspur

* To a temporary conclusion at least, for Shakespeare continued the story in *Henry IV, Part 2*, which the student should read. The two-part arrangement in itself raises the problem of unity in a special form. Suffice it to say here that, whatever the total unity which the two parts taken together may have, this first part has its own special unity which it is our immediate problem here to attempt to define.

Falstaff's death is mentioned in *Henry V*, and he is the central figure in *The Merry Wives of Windsor;* but in this latter play, most critics and scholars agree that he comes closer to the mere buffoon—that he lacks the special quality of character shown in the *Henry* plays.

when he comes within the orbit of Falstaff? Or what, for that matter, happens to Falstaff when he comes between the "fell incensed points/ Of mighty opposites"? If he affords no more than comic relief, then we are perhaps justified in holding that as a character he is a lucky accident, a character who was, in Shakespeare's original plans, to have figured as a sort of jester, but who became something richer and more imaginative than intended. As a matter of fact, one might, pushing this line of argument a step further, contend that Falstaff has actually so far outgrown the needs of the play, strictly considered, that he comes close to destroying it.

It is possible, however, to see Falstaff's role as a more positive one than that of merely diverting us *from* the more serious concerns of the play. It is possible that his function is to define—as well as enrich—the theme of the play. But to explore this possibility will involve a rather careful consideration of his relation to the other characters in the play and a further inquiry into the theme—the total "meaning" of the play.

2. THE SYSTEM OF CONTRASTS IN THE PLAY

If *Henry IV, Part I* does have a principle of unity, it is obviously one which allows for, and makes positive use of, an amazing amount of contrast. Many of these contrasts have already been noted in the questions which come at the end of each act. There is the contrast between the king's [illegible]

called to debate the state of the realm and those other councils at the Boar's Head which take measures for the better lifting of travelers' purses. Moreover, as we have remarked earlier, Prince Hal and Percy Hotspur are obvious foils for each other; they are specifically contrasted again and again throughout the play. But one of the most important contrasts developed in the play is that between Falstaff and Percy Hotspur.

On one level, it ought to be pretty obvious, the play involves a study in the nature of kingship—not an unduly solemn study, to be sure—but a study, nevertheless, of what makes a good king. In this study, of course, Prince Hal is the central figure, and the play becomes, then, the study of his development.

On this level of consideration, Percy Hotspur not only is Hal's rival but also furnishes an ideal of conduct toward which Hal might aspire (and toward which his father, the king, actually wishes him to aspire) Falstaff represents another ideal of conduct—and here, consequently, finds his foil in Hotspur. (If the pairing of Falstaff and Hotspur seems, at first glance, forced, nevertheless we shall presently see that there is abundant evidence that Shakespeare thought the contrast important and relevant to his purpose.)

Indeed, as Mr. R. P. Warren has pointed out, it is almost as if Shakespeare were following, consciously or unconsciously, the theme of Aristotle's Nichomachaean ethics: virtue as the mean between two extremes of con-

duct. This suggestion can be used to throw a good deal of light on the relationship of the characters of Falstaff, Prince Hal, and Hotspur to each other.

Consider the matter of honor. Hotspur represents one extreme, Falstaff, the other. Hotspur declares characteristically

> By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
> To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon, . . .
> (I. iii, 201–02)

Falstaff speaks just as characteristically when he argues in his famous speech on honor: "Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on? how then? Can honour set to a leg? no: or an arm? no: or take away the grief of a wound? no . . . (V. i)

Falstaff's common sense is devastating; but it is also crippling—or would be to a prince or ruler. If it does not cripple Falstaff, it is because Falstaff frankly refuses to accept the responsibilities of leadership. Perhaps he chooses wisely in so refusing. By refusing he achieves a vantage point from which he can perceive the folly and pretentiousness which, to a degree, always tend to associate themselves with authority of any-kind.

But Hotspur's chivalry is crippling too. He wants to fight for honor's sake: he will not wait for reinforcements because it will beget more honor to fight without waiting for them; but, on the other hand, he will not fight at all (Worcester fears) if he hears of the king's mollifying offer, for then his pride will be saved, his honor preserved, and the political aspects of the rebellion can go hang; for Hotspur has little or no interest in them. Indeed, Hotspur can rely on the obvious fact that he is fighting merely for honor to gain the forgiveness of the king, though Worcester fears that the forgiveness extended to himself will be only a nominal forgiveness and that the king will be on the lookout for later excuses to injure him.

If one assumes the necessity for leadership (and there is little doubt that the Elizabethan audience and Shakespeare did), then Hotspur points to an extreme which the truly courageous leader must avoid quite as clearly as he must avoid the other extreme represented by Falstaff. True courage, we may say, has as one frontier an unthinking impetuousness like that of Hotspur: it has as its other frontier a kind of calculation, which, if not cowardice, at least results in actions which look very much like cowardice. Falstaff is too "practical"; Hotspur, not "practical" enough.

3. THE "IMMATURITY" OF FALSTAFF AND HOTSPUR

Yet Shakespeare does not give us an oversimplified picture of either extreme. Falstaff redeems himself for most of us by his humor, by his good nature, by his love of life, and perhaps, most of all, by a thoroughgoing intellectual honesty. Hotspur also has his attractive side. There is a kind of abandon, a kind of light-hearted gaiety—in his whole-souled commitment to the pursuit of honor, in his teasing of his wife, and in his laughing

at the pompous mystery-mongering of Glendower—which puts him, like Falstaff, *above* the plots and counter-plots that fill up the play.

Yet—if we assume the necessity for leadership and authority—both Falstaff and Hotspur are *below* the serious concerns that fill the play. About both of them there is a childlike quality which relieves them of the responsibility of mature life, a frankness which is the opposite of the pretense and hypocrisy so apparent in the adult world.*

This suggestion that there is something childlike and immature about Falstaff and Hotspur must, of course, be heavily qualified. There is a sense in which Hotspur is the epitome of manliness and aggressive masculinity, and certainly he thinks of himself as anything but childish. Moreover, Falstaff, in spite of the war cry with which he sets upon the travelers, "They hate us youth: down with them; fleece them," is old in the ways of vice, and indeed possesses a kind of wisdom which makes the solemn concerns of Henry IV's court appear callow and naïve beside it.

And yet, even so, the pair do not stand quite on the level of the adult world where there are jobs to be done and duties to be performed. They are either below it or else they transcend it; and Shakespeare is wise enough to let them—particularly Falstaff—do both. That is, they appear sometimes *childish* in their attitudes and sometimes *childlike*, for Shakespeare exploits both aspects of their characters in the play.

The childlike qualities, of course, are found predominantly in Falstaff—in his vitality and in his preservation of a kind of innocence. But Hotspur, too, has a kind of innocence which sets him apart from the more calculating of his fellow-conspirators. He is impulsive where they are Machiavellian; boyish, in his love of adventure, where they are playing coldly for high stakes. But the childlike innocence (or, if one prefers, the boyish impulsiveness) merges into childish foolhardiness when he insists on fighting the king at Shrewsbury before reinforcements can be brought up.

4. FALSTAFF AT THE BATTLE OF SHREWSBURY

Falstaff is, of course, a far more complex character than Hotspur, or, for that matter, than any other character in the play. But an examination of the childish-childlike aspects of his nature may, even if it will not wholly account for the richness of his personality, lead the student into a further knowledge of that richness. Certainly, it may give us one of the most important clues as to how his character is related to the central problems of the play.

Falstaff as Philosopher. Falstaff, we may say, is like the child in the story who alone was able to detect the fact that the emperor's new clothes were entirely imaginary. With a clarity of vision that is unclouded by reverence towards authority of any kind, the child sees that the emperor is

* If the student, remembering, for example, how "damnably" Falstaff has "misused the king's press," feels disposed to challenge this observation, he should be reminded that the matter in question is not Falstaff's goodness but his frankness and irresponsibility He has the child's honest selfishness and the child's lack of conscience as he frankly goes after his own ends

naked, and says so. (Falstaff strips Henry IV quite naked in his famous parody of the king's speech in Act II. iv. King Henry's concern for his son's wicked ways, as we see in Act III, is more than half an extension of his own self-conceit. His son's reputation disturbs him because he regards it as a reflection upon himself.)

Falstaff's clarity of vision, however, is not an effect of cynicism. The spectacle of the world in its nakedness, stripped of its pretensions, does not move Falstaff to bitterness. He can laugh in thorough good humor. And Falstaff does laugh continually through the play as he sees through what is glibly called "honor," through self-righteousness, through the pretensions of royalty. In this sense, like the child, he is fundamentally a moral anarchist. But Falstaff is—again like the child—not a missionary anarchist. He does not for a moment intend to convert others to his views; he is not the moralist, certainly, nor the inverted moralist, the cynic.

In short, in spite of the fact that he speaks merely to amuse himself and others, Falstaff supplies a brilliant and what is—up to a point—a perfectly true commentary upon the world about him. Falstaff is doubtless the last man in the world to set up for a philosopher; yet his humor, because it does have point and does make a rich commentary upon the world about him, does have a philosophical quality.

Falstaff as Man of Action. But in Act V we see Falstaff as man of action, and this action tests him even as the world of action is tested by Falstaff's commentary. On a battlefield the committed man of action must be prepared to die, but Falstaff does not feel the need to die for any man. He frankly sees no point in dying by Douglas's sword for King Henry. King Henry himself, as Falstaff well knows, is scarcely likely to appreciate such a devotion on Falstaff's part. Hal himself will not lose or retain his chances for the crown by Falstaff's death alone; and the issue, when Douglas challenges him, is certainly death; for Falstaff, in spite of his playful boasting, has absolutely no illusions about his own prowess as a warrior.

Falstaff loses no time in resolving his problem: he contents himself with playing 'possum. From one point of view, this is simply cowardice; from another, Falstaff is being perfectly consistent, and, to be so, risking the imputation of cowardice. In the same situation Blunt declares heroically, "I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot"; he believes in honor, and so he has his reward, even in death. Falstaff is equally consistent because he does not believe in honor; for him, heroics would be a pretense—phony honor.

The Parallelism of Falstaff and Hotspur. If the student has had any difficulty in seeing and accepting the parallelism between Falstaff and Hotspur, he might reflect that in this last act of the play the author himself has taken some pains to point it up, and may be said to have allowed at least Prince Hal, among the characters, to see it. In this connection Hal's speech over the dead body of Hotspur and his remarks over Falstaff's "dead" body, which he discovers a moment later, are worth careful consideration.

William Empson has pointed out (in his *English Pastoral Poetry*) that Hal's remarks here involve a series of puns applying both to largeness of body and to greatness of spirit. Of Hotspur the prince says:

> When that this body did contain a spirit,
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

A few lines later, he is saying of Falstaff:

> What, old acquaintance! could not all this flesh
> Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell!
> I could have better spared a better man:
> O, I should have a heavy miss of thee,
> If I were much in love with vanity!
> Death hath not struck so fat a deer to-day, . . .

Hotspur has had too much spirit for the flesh; Falstaff has had so much flesh that it is ironical that the spirit has escaped at all. (The irony is increased, of course, by our knowing that Prince Hal little realizes how truly he speaks: the flesh that Falstaff so comfortably hugs about himself has *not*, as a matter of fact, allowed the spirit to escape.)

Moreover, it is significant that the prince, although he thinks that Falstaff has died in battle, refers to him as a "deer," a hunted animal, who would not fight back but would try to escape from the pursuit of death. From the standpoint of the huntsman (death) he is a fine animal ("so fat a deer"), and to the prince a "heavy loss" (another pun) though "better men" have died for his cause that day.

Is the prince mocking and cold-hearted? Hardly; the jesting farewell is the sort which accords with the jesting and affectionate companionship of the two in the past. It conveys a depth of feeling that perhaps would not be conveyed by a more solemn tribute.

At least Falstaff, who of course hears the prince's tribute, suffers no hurt feelings from the nature of the tribute. He has no shame and no qualms. In fact, only the word "Embowelled" runs the shivers up and down his back. The [illegible]
prince stirs no regr[illegible]
honorably. Falstaff [illegible]
Hotspur may have [illegible]
doubtless, the prince intends for him. Falstaff is perfectly satisfied to abide by the choice which he has made.

Falstaff's Failure. Still, from the point of view of the need for responsibility [illegible]
worse— [illegible]
funny [illegible]
of sack; and the prince himself doubtless smiles as he delivers his reprimand. But the reprimand is deserved: Falstaff won't realize that the battle-

field is no place for joking. Indeed, though Shakespeare allows Falstaff his due even here, he has made the case against Falstaff very plain.

Consider the incident in Act V. iv. An Elizabethan audience would not have missed the point when, just after Falstaff has stabbed the dead Hotspur, Prince Hal came on the scene with his younger brother, Prince John, and says to him

> Come, brother John; full bravely hast thou flesh'd
> Thy maiden sword.

The commendation of Prince John applies ironically to "Brother" John Falstaff—here in full view of the audience—whose sword is a "maiden" sword too, which he has just "flesh'd" safely in the dead Percy. The boy prince John has shown himself a man: Sir John Falstaff has shown himself a child.

5. FALSTAFF AND THE WORLD OF HISTORY

The student may possibly object to so heavy an emphasis upon the battlefield scenes: yet our search for the unity of the play demands that we consider carefully this one group of scenes in which all the characters come together. Besides bringing all the characters together, too, the battle scenes subordinate Falstaff, for all his delightfulness, to something larger (somewhat to the resentment of readers to whom Falstaff is a kind of demigod); and this subordination itself is a unifying process.

But the battle scenes do not cancel out the more widely discussed tavern scenes; they qualify the tavern scenes. We may now return to reconsider the tavern scenes in the light of these qualifications.

It is perhaps significant that Falstaff is introduced to us with the line: "Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?"—a question which the prince answers with a jest: ". . . What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack and minutes capons and clocks the tongues of bawds and dials the signs of leaping-houses and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day." The jesting in the prince's speech may not come quite up to the better efforts of Falstaff himself; but the speech, quite apart from the jesting, is perfectly true. It is true in a deeper sense than even the prince realizes.

It is indeed an absurdity for Falstaff to ask the time of day, for Falstaff has properly nothing to do with the world of time. He transcends the time-ridden world of important affairs—the world of appointments to be kept, of tasks to be performed, of responsibilities to be undertaken. Time does not exist in his world. This is not to say, of course, that Falstaff's world is one in which nothing ever happens. For Falstaff, that world is interesting and even exciting. But in it, one is not dogged by time just as the child is not dogged by time in his world.

Falstaff and the King. For Falstaff, each day is a new day, lived for itself. The future does not cast a cloud over the present. This characteristic Shakespeare has emphasized by pointing up a sharp contrast between

Falstaff and the king. The king is bedeviled with insomnia; Falstaff is not. [illegible] of [illegible] ıld [illegible] the [illegible] is [illegible] art of the king, Falstaff, as we have earlier observed (see Question 8 on Act II), parodies the sententious Euphuistic style which was popular in the period. But the parody involves more than a mere topical allusion: Falstaff is using the parody of style as an instrument for a deeper parody. He is mocking at the kind of seriousness with which authority has to express—and *take*—itself: the carefully balanced antitheses, the allusions to natural history, the appeal to learned authorities, the labored truisms—e.g., "There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch: this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; . . ." The fun is good-humored; but the criticism which it turns upon the institutions of authority is penetrating, and, as far as it goes, perfectly fair. Falstaff as "king" in the tavern is a delightful comedian *because* he is a recognizable monarch; that is, he does not use the pose of royalty merely for slap-stick effects.

But Shakespeare, whom we see constantly balancing scene against scene, has the king "counterfeited" once more in the play—on the battlefield, where knights and nobles wear the king's armor. Sir Walter Blunt, so dressed, is accosted by Douglas with "some tell me that thou art a king," and replies with the noble lie, "They tell thee true." He fights with Douglas and dies for the king—doubly. Falstaff appears on the scene immediately and, noticing Blunt's dead body, remarks "there's honour for you!" No aping of the king for him! The king's robes in the tavern play are one thing; the king's coat of arms on the battlefield, quite another.*

6. SHAKESPEARE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD FALSTAFF AND THE PRINCE

Here we come to the crucial problem of unity: what attitude, finally, are we to adopt toward Falstaff and the prince? Which is right? With which

* There has been of late a tendency to defend Falstaff even here to say that Falstaff in his debunking of honor is right after all; that Falstaff sees truly through the empty conventions of "honor", that he refuses to be taken in by the vainglorious pretensions of the usurper, Henry Bolingbroke, to "honor" and to a legitimacy which he does not deserve. Such critics go on to point out that the device of clothing a number of knights so as to counterfeit the king makes rather hollow all the talk about chivalry and honor that goes on with regard to the battle.

But to take this position is to read into the play far more than the play warrants If the dynastic pretensions of various people in fifteenth-century England seem trivial enough to us, they did not seem so to Shakespeare's audience or to Shakespeare himself There is nothing in the play to warrant the belief that Shakespeare is bitterly denying the reality of honor and chivalry. Falstaff never rises to a philosophic indictment which will issue in his calling down a "plague on both your houses."

of the two are our sympathies finally to rest? Those readers who have felt the charm of Falstaff and who have sensed the fact that Shakespeare is not disposed to defend the duplicities of the king are surely right in refusing to dismiss Falstaff as a coward or buffoon. Furthermore, they may be right in feeling that Shakespeare has even revealed in Prince Hal himself a certain cold-blooded calculation.

The probability is that we shall miss the play if we assume that Shakespeare is forcing upon us a choice of the *either-or* variety. Is it not possible that Shakespeare is not asking us to choose at all, but rather to contemplate, with understanding and some irony, a world very much like the world that we know, a world in which compromises have to be made, a world in which the virtues of Falstaff become, under changed conditions, vices, and the vices of the Prince Hal become, under certain conditions, necessary, and thus, in a sense, accommodated to virtue? (One might well reverse the form of this statement. From the point of view of an Elizabethan audience, one would almost certainly have to reverse it thus: Falstaff's vices partake of virtue and the virtues of the prince—an easy camaraderie, a genial understanding, an unwillingness to stand on a haughty dignity—are revealed to him ultimately as vices which must be put away.)

The Two Worlds of the Play. Human beings live in a world of time, and a world in which—except at rare heroic moments—compromises have to be made. Falstaff lives, as we have already suggested, in a world of the eternal present, a timeless world which stands apart from the time-harried world of adult concerns. Yet Shakespeare keeps the balance with complete fairness. Each world has its claims. For the prince to be able to retire for awhile into Falstaff's world is worth something to him. It testifies to his humanity, since Falstaff's world is a part of the human world. It probably makes him a better king than he would be if he followed his more calculating and limited father's wishes. Bathed in the light of Falstaff's world, the coldness, the pomposity, the pretentiousness of the world of high concerns is properly exposed. Yet, after all, men must act; responsibilities must be assumed. To remain in Falstaff's world is to deny the reality of the whole world of adult concerns.

It is ironic, of course, that the human being is thus divided between the claims of two aspects of life. It is ironic, from one point of view, that men must grow up at all—must grow away from the innocence of the timeless and amoral world of childhood into the adult world, where except when crises evoke extraordinary devotion and resolution, compromises and scheming are a regular, and perhaps inevitable, part of human experience. Prince Hal, for example, in entering into the world of affairs, loses something as well as gains something—a matter which the play (particularly in its second part) rather clearly indicates. Falstaff may belong to a world unshadowed by time, but it is not for nothing that Prince Hal appears in a "history" play. He belongs to history—to the world of time—and in the Battle of Shrewsbury he enters into history.

7. HENRY IV AS MATURE COMEDY

The problem of Shakespeare's attitude toward Hal and Falstaff has been argued for a long time, and doubtless will continue to be argued. At the end of *Henry IV, Part Two* the prince, on being crowned, publicly rejects Falstaff, and thus makes formal and explicit what is hinted at at the end of *Part One*. Having arrived at kingship with its serious duties, he can have no more time for such play as the Boar's-Head Tavern afforded. Delightful as Falstaff is, he must now be put by.

The Two Interpretations of Shakespeare's Attitude. *With regard to* [illegible] *this relationship there have been, in general,* [illegible] plays as constituting a study [illegible] was to be celebrated as the ideal king in Shakespeare's *Henry V*. According to this interpretation, the two plays present Falstaff as undergoing a gradual degeneration of character. Thus, it is argued, we lose some of our sympathy for him and are reconciled to the young king's rejection of him.

The second interpretation reverses the first. Here it is argued that Falstaff retains our sympathies to the end. Hal's conduct, on the other hand, is regarded as having, from the beginning, something of Machiavellian policy in it. Hal delights in Falstaff's company during his carefree youth but dashes the old man's hopes rather brutally at the end by publicly disowning him and reading him a rather smug sermon on the subject of good conduct.

Few critics have, of course, accepted either view without some reservations and qualifications, but it may make the issues clearer to state the views in extreme form as is here done. That the matter of [illegible] toward the Falstaff-Hal relationship is important comes out [illegible] consult the most recent book on the subject, Dover W[illegible] Wilson sees the plays as involving basically a study [illegible] has to be rejected. Though, for Wilson, he remains [illegible] through the whole of *Henry IV, Part Two*, he becomes [illegible] with a correspondent weakening of our sympathy for him. [illegible] defends the terms of the rejection: Hal is not a [illegible] Falstaff, after all, is not visited with a heavy punishment. The king sees to it that he, along with his other "wonted followers," is [illegible]

Shakespeare's Balance. To repeat, the present analysis agrees on the need of having the matter both ways. Surely. Wilson is at his soundest when he argues that Shakespeare keeps the balance [illegible] between Hal and Falstaff; but perhaps he might, on the whole, have made out a more convincing case had he pressed this argument further still instead of trying to mitigate the terms of Falstaff's rejection or to argue that the later Falstaff becomes less attractive than the earlier Falstaff. [illegible] rejection of Falstaff something is lost [illegible] must reject Falstaff, but [illegible] king, something else

something spontaneous, something in itself good and attractive—must be sacrificed; that growing up is something which man must do and yet that even in growing up he loses, necessarily, something that is valuable?

Shakespeare does not sentimentalize the situation. The rejection is necessary if Hal is to become the king that he ought to be and that England doubtless needs; and yet Falstaff's dashed hopes are presented with due pathos. The sentimentalist will doubtless need to blacken Falstaff's character a little—suppress his sympathy for him—in order to be able to accept his being turned off; or, if he is unable to do this, he will, in order to justify Falstaff's rejection, doubtless have to blacken the prince's character, reading into it more of the "vile politician Bolingbroke" than Shakespeare ever intended. The stern moralist (and he is nearer allied to the sentimentalist than is usually suspected) will do much the same: he will probably applaud the rejection of Falstaff whole-heartedly, or, just possibly and perversely, he will condemn the prince for his acceptance of pomp and power and for his cold heart.

Neither the sentimentalist nor the moralist, then, will be able to accept the play in its fullness. It is possible, of course, that even for the mature reader, the play finally lacks unity—that the balancing of attitudes which has been argued for in this analysis is something which perhaps Shakespeare should have attempted to accomplish but did not, for one reason or another, actually succeed in accomplishing. This, of course, each reader must decide for himself. For the reader who remains unconvinced of any totality of effect, the play will probably remain a collection of brilliant but ill-assorted fragments—the wonderful tavern scenes juxtaposed oddly with passages of dull and pawky history.

For the reader, however, for whom the play does achieve a significant unity it may well seem that here Shakespeare has given us one of the wisest and fullest commentaries on human action possible to the comic mode—a view which scants nothing, which covers up nothing, and which takes into account in making its affirmations the most searching criticism of that which is affirmed. For such a reader, Shakespeare has no easy moral to draw, no simple generalization to make.

Shakespeare's Irony. Moreover, it will be evident that Shakespeare's final attitude toward his characters (and toward the human predicament, generally) is one of a very complex irony, though it is an irony which will be either missed altogether, or easily misinterpreted as an indifferent relativism—that is, a mere balancing of two realms of conduct and a refusal to make any judgment between them. The world which Shakespeare portrays here is a world of contradictions and of mixtures of good and evil. His vision of that world is ultimately a comic vision—if not gaily comic, and surely not bitterly comic, yet informed with the insights of mature comedy, nonetheless. For the comic writer does not attempt to transcend the world of compromises, even though the more thoughtful writer of comedy, as here, may be fully aware of the seriousness of the issues. Comedy, after all, does not treat the lives of saints or heroes: it does not

attempt to portray the absolute commitment to ultimate issues—the total commitment which transcends, tragically and heroically, the everyday world that we know. Shakespeare does not present Prince Hal (as he might conceivably do in a tragic treatment) as a callous man, the scion of the "vile politician Bolingbroke." Hal will make a good ruler, and Falstaff would undoubtedly make a very bad ruler. Nor, on the other hand, is Falstaff portrayed as a villain: Falstaff, too, has his case. Falstaff's wit—most of it at least—is not merely amusing, trifling. It constitutes a criticism of the world of serious affairs, a criticism which, on certain levels, is thoroughly valid. The rulers of the world had better not leave it totally out of account.

If the prince must choose between two courses of action—and, of course, he must choose—we as readers are not forced to choose: indeed, perhaps the core of Shakespeare's ironic insight comes to this: that man must choose and yet that the choice can never be a wholly satisfactory one. If the play is a comedy in this sense, then the "comic" scenes of the play turn out to be only an aspect of, though an important aspect of, the larger comedy. To repeat, the reader must decide for himself whether he can accept the play as a fully unified organism. But the reader who can so

QUESTIONS

1. By way of summary, notice how many characters Falstaff is, at one time or another, contrasted with or balanced against. Does this structure tend to create or prevent an artificial symmetry? Does it suggest that the meaning of Falstaff is narrow and easily definable, or rich and elusive?

2. Is Falstaff's account of his battle with Hotspur (V. iv) anticipated by his account of the hold-up in II. iv? How, in each case, does he remain "master of the situation"?

3. Note how the word *counterfeit* keeps echoing through V. iv You will find it, on one occasion, balanced against the word *true*, and you will also find other terms suggesting the same antithesis. Do such passages suggest to you a continued treatment of the problem suggested by the *true-false* chorus in Acts I and II? Consult Act II, Question 12

4. We have said that Shakespeare's treatment of his theme is essentially comic—rather than sentimental or moralistic. In fact, the entire discussion of what the play "says" implies that the play is comedy and implies, at the same time, a definition of comedy. By way of taking a further step toward a definition of comedy, the student should re-read, in this connection, the section "The Nature of Comedy" in the analysis of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. In each play he will find a tendency to contemplate, in a balanced, objective manner, the merits of certain contrasting claims to

which human beings are subject. Elsewhere we have suggested, further, that "the way of the world" is a key phrase to the nature of comedy. Does *Henry IV* tend to strengthen or diminish the merits of that suggestion?

5. It may have occurred to the student that a discussion of *Henry IV, Part One* as a kind of comedy is really irrelevant since the play is technically not a comedy or tragedy but a "history." (The first folio of Shakespeare's plays divides the plays into these three categories and places the Henry IV plays among the "histories.") Yet even if we assume that there is a distinct *genre* called history, still, is not the matter of the author's attitude toward his characters and their doings relevant and important? Is it not obviously of great importance in this play? And do not comedy and tragedy involve most importantly the matter of attitude—the degree of seriousness, the degree of sympathy, the degree of ironical qualification with which the author would have his audience take the materials in question?

6. The student should read *Henry IV, Part Two* and then attempt to answer the following questions: Is there further development in the character of Prince Hal? Does the character of Falstaff suffer any degeneration? Are the comic scenes in this part as funny as those in *Part One?* Do the history elements and the comedy elements in this play form a unity? If so, in what terms? What is the special role of Prince John in this play? Consider, in answering this question, the fact that Prince John ensnares the rebels by a piece of sharp dealing. Does this have any effect on our attitude toward the "honor" and chivalry of those who support the crown? Does the absence of any figure like Hotspur on the rebel side affect our attitude toward the rebels? What attitude are we to take toward the rejection of Falstaff at the end of the play? In general, test your theories about Falstaff and Hal and about the general theme of *Part One* against the substance of *Part Two*. (In this connection read the first scenes of *Henry V* recounting the death of Falstaff. How does this last comment by Shakespeare on Falstaff affect, if at all, the total picture of Falstaff?)

7. The student should read *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Why have most scholars and critics agreed that the Falstaff here depicted differs from the Falstaff of the Henry plays? In what respects is he different? For what is his humor used in this play? Would it be fair to say that the comedy of this play approaches farce? Is it possible that *The Merry Wives* constitutes evidence that, since Falstaff is a more brilliant comic character in the "history" plays, the serious material, though superficially incongruous, is necessary after all? In other words, does not *The Merry Wives* suggest that the apparently incongruous mixture of history and comedy is justified since Falstaff, against a purely comic background, is really not so comic as Falstaff against the background of serious concerns?

5. Congreve, *The Way of the World*

WILLIAM CONGREVE'S *The Way of the World* (1700) is usually thought of, despite its late date, as belonging to "Restoration Comedy"—the witty, satirical comedy characteristic of the period after the restoration of the Stuart line to the British throne in 1660. Indeed, Congreve's play is often described as the last and best production of that period of English comedy.

Although posterity has consistently made some such evaluation of the play, *The Way of the World* was not successful when it was first presented. As he reads, the student should try to discover the reasons why the play did fail, and at the same time why it has since been much admired. Two aspects of the play which the student will very soon notice are the complexity of the plot and the brilliance of the wit, and in these perhaps, all the answers may be found.

It has been somewhat of a fashion to say that the plot can be ignored, more or less, and the witty passages simply read for their own sake; and it may be of service to the student to keep this dictum in mind as he reads. If he decides that the plot is indeed only a frothy addition to the conversation, he will of course have to conclude that the play falls short of dramatic perfection. But if he finds that he can make a case for the plot, he will obviously feel that Congreve has produced not only a witty, but also an integrated, work.

At any rate, the student should not neglect the plot from the outset. To judge the play, he must see clearly what is going on, and he may do very well to give the play, before he attempts further study, the two careful readings which are needed if the plot is to be got straight. Nor will repetition detract from appreciation of the repartee.

It may well be that the student, as he begins to read this play, will find himself reminded of Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* The fact that he has read Sheridan's play may, indeed, make the reading of Congreve's comedy somewhat easier, for some of the resemblances between the plays are very real, and some are significant on a deeper level But though the world of 1700, like that of 1777, was a world of coffee-houses, periwigs, and brilliant fashion, the England of 1700 differs in some very important regards from the England of 1777. What is even more to the purpose, however, is that the plays differ even more—in mood, in atmosphere, in tone, in quality of intention The student should obviously use his acquaintance with Sheridan's play to illuminate Congreve's: he should not, however, allow it to blind him to highly important differences which exist between them.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FAINALL, *in love with Mrs. Marwood*
MIRABELL, *in love with Mrs. Millamant*
WITWOUD, PETULANT } *followers of Mrs. Millamant*
SIR WILFULL WITWOUD, *half-brother to Witwoud, and nephew to Lady Wishfort*
WAITWELL, *servant to Mirabell*
Dancers, Footmen, and Attendants
LADY WISHFORT, *enemy to Mirabell, for having falsely pretended love to her*
MRS. MILLAMANT, *a fine lady, niece to Lady Wishfort, and loves Mirabell*
MRS. MARWOOD, *friend to Mr. Fainall, and likes Mirabell*
MRS. FAINALL, *daughter to Lady Wishfort, and wife to Fainall, formerly friend to Mirabell*
FOIBLE, *woman to Lady Wishfort*
MINCING, *woman to Mrs. Millamant*
[BETTY, *waiting-maid at a chocolate-house*]
[PEG, *maid to Lady Wishfort*]
[Singer]

SCENE: *London*

PROLOGUE

Of those few fools who with ill stars are cursed,
Sure scribbling fools called poets, fare the worst:
For they're a sort of fools which Fortune makes,
And after she has made 'em fools, forsakes.
With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a different case,
For Fortune favors all her idiot-race.
In her own nest the cuckoo-eggs we find,
O'er which she broods to hatch the changeling-kind.
No portion for her own she has to spare,
So much she dotes on her adopted care.
Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
Suffered at first some trifling stakes to win;
But what unequal hazards do they run!
Each time they write they venture all they've won:
The squire that's buttered[1] still, is sure to be undone.
This author heretofore has found your favor;
But pleads no merit from his past behavior.
To build on that might prove a vain presumption,
Should grants, to poets made, admit resumption:
And in Parnassus he must lose his seat,
If that be found a forfeited estate.

He owns with toil he wrought the following scenes;
But, if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains:
Damn him the more; have no commiseration
For dullness on mature deliberation.
He swears he'll not resent one hissed-off scene,
Nor, like those peevish wits, his play maintain,
Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.
Some plot we think he has, and some new thought;
Some humor too, no farce—but that's a fault.
Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect;
For so reformed a town who dares correct?
To please, this time, has been his sole pretence,
He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.

[1] Compare the modern slang term.

Should he by chance a knave or fool expose,
That hurts none here; sure, here are none of those.
In short, our play shall (with your leave to show it)
Give you one instance of a passive poet,
Who to your judgments yields all resignation;
So save or damn, after your own discretion.

ACT I

[SCENE: A chocolate-house.]

[*Mirabell and Fainall rising from cards, Betty waiting.*]

Mirabell: You are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall!

Fainall: Have we done?

Mirabell: What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

Fainall: No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently. The coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

Mirabell: You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

Fainall: Prithee, why so reserved? Something has put you out of humor.

Mirabell: Not at all. I happen to be grave to-day, and you are gay, that's all.

Fainall: Confess, Millamant and you quarrelled last night after I left you; my fair cousin has some humors that would tempt the patience of a stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by?

Mirabell: Witwoud and Petulant; and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or to sum up all in her own name, my old Lady Wishfort came in.

Fainall: Oh, there it is then! She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason.—What, then my wife was there?

Mirabell: Yes, and Mrs. Marwood, and three or four more, whom I never saw before. Seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whispered one another; then complained aloud of the vapors[2] and after fell into a profound silence.

Fainall: They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mirabell: For which reason I resolved not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose, and with a constrained smile, told her I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome. She reddened, and I withdrew without expecting her reply.

Fainall: You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mirabell: She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such a resignation.

Fainall: What! though half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mirabell: I was then in such a humor, that I should have been better pleased if she had been less discreet.

Fainall: Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal nights. They have 'em three times a week, and meet by turns at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week. You and I are excluded, and it was once proposed that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved that, to avoid scandal, there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwoud and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mirabell: And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My Lady Wish-[illegible]

[2] [illegible]

fort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind, and, full of the vigor of fifty-five, declares for a friend and ratafia[3]; and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fainall: The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal your love to her niece, has provoked this separation; had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

Mirabell: I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labor. The devil's in't, if an old woman is to be flattered further, unless a man should endeavor downright personally to debauch her; and that my virtue forbade me. But for the discovery of this amour I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

Fainall: What should provoke her to be your enemy unless she has made you advances which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mirabell: She was always civil to me till of late. I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice, and think that she who does not refuse 'em everything, can refuse 'em nothing.

Fainall: You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and though you may have cruelty enough not to satisfy a lady's longing, you have too much generosity not to be tender of her honor. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

[3] A liqueur flavored with fruit or fruit kernels.

Mirabell: You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected and confesses you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you than is your wife.

Fainall: Fie, fie, friend! If you grow censorious I must leave you.—I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mirabell: Who are they?

Fainall: Petulant and Witwoud.—[*To Betty.*] Bring me some chocolate. [*Exit Fainall.*]

Mirabell: Betty, what says your clock?

Betty: Turned of the last canonical hour,[4] sir. [*Exit Betty.*]

Mirabell: How pertinently the jade answers me!—[*Looking on his watch.*]—Ha? almost one o'clock!—Oh, y'are come! [*Enter a Servant.*] Well, is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

Servant: Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras[5] that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up, and no hopes appearing of dispatch—besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's-place[6] and there they were riveted in a trice.

Mirabell: So, so! You are sure they are married?

Servant: Married and bedded, sir; I am witness.

Mirabell: Have you the certificate?

Servant: Here it is, sir.

Mirabell: Has the tailor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

Servant: Yes, sir.

Mirabell: That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the consummation till further orders. Bid Waitwell shake his ears, and Dame Partlet rustle up her feathers and meet me at

[4] Hour of legal marriage in a parish church.

[5] St. Pancras Church, where marriages were performed without a license at any time.

[6] Site of St. James's church, where many irregular marriages took place.

one o'clock by Rosamond's Pond,[7] that I may see her before she returns to her lady; and as you tender your ears be secret. [*Exit Servant.*] [*Enter Fainall and Betty.*]

Fainall. Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleased.

Mirabell: Aye; I have been engaged in a matter of some sort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is not a cabal night. I wonder, Fainall, that you, who are married and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

Fainall: Faith; I am not jealous Besides, most who are engaged are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

Mirabell: I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal; for a woman who is not a fool, can have but one reason for associating with a man who is one.

Fainall: Are you jealous as often as you see Witwoud entertained by Millamant?

Mirabell: Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

Fainall: You do her wrong; for, to give her her due, she has wit.

Mirabell: She has beauty enough to make any man think so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Fainall: For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mirabell: And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults—nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces, sifted her, and separated her failings; I studied 'em, and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large that I was not without hopes one day or other to hate her heartily: to which end I so used myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less and less disturbance, till in a few days it became habitual to me to remember 'em without being displeased. They are [illegible] own [illegible] in a [illegible] m as well.

Fainall: Marry her, marry her! Be half as well acquainted with her charms as you are with her defects, and my life on't, you are your own man again.

Mirabell. Say you so?

Fainall: Aye, aye, I have experience: I have a wife, and so forth. [*Enter Messenger.*]

Messenger: Is one Squire Witwoud here?

Betty: Yes, what's your business?

Messenger: I have a letter for him from his brother Sir Wilfull, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

Betty: He's in the next room, friend—that way. [*Exit Messenger.*]

Mirabell: What, is the chief of that noble family in town—Sir Wilfull Witwoud?

Fainall: He is expected to-day Do you know him?

Mirabell. I have seen him; he promises to be an extraordinary person. I think you have the honor to be related to him.

Fainall: Yes; he is half-brother to this Witwoud by a former wife, who was sister to my Lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too

Mirabell: I had rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

Fainall: He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

Mirabell: For travel! Why, the man that I mean is above forty.

Fainall: No matter for that; 'tis for

[7] In St. James's Park, scene of Act II.

the honor of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

Mirabell: I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fainall: By no means; 'tis better as 'tis. 'Tis better to trade with a little loss, than be quite eaten up with being overstocked.

Mirabell: Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant and those of the squire his brother anything related?

Fainall: Not at all; Witwoud grows by the knight, like a medlar [8] grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

Mirabell: So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

Fainall: Sir Wilfull is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy.—But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the monster in *The Tempest,*[9] and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good nature, and does not always want wit.

Mirabell: Not always; but as often as his memory fails him, and his commonplace of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory and some few scraps of other folks' wit. He is one whose conversation can never be approved; yet it is now and then to be endured. He has indeed one good quality—he is not exceptious; for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest, and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire.

Fainall: If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length.—Behold the original! [*Enter Witwoud.*]

Witwoud: Afford me your compassion, my dears! Pity me, Fainall! Mirabell, pity me!

Mirabell: I do, from my soul.

Fainall: Why, what's the matter?

Witwoud: No letters for me, Betty?

Betty: Did not a messenger bring you one but now, sir?

Witwoud. Aye, but no other?

Betty: No, sir.

Witwoud: That's hard, that's very hard.—A messenger, a mule, a beast of burden! He has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another. And what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author as an epistle dedicatory.

Mirabell: A fool,—and your brother, Witwoud!

Witwoud: Aye, aye, my half-brother. My half-brother he is, no nearer, upon honor.

Mirabell: Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

Witwoud: Good, good, Mirabell, *le drôle!* Good, good; hang him, don't let's talk of him.—Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say anything in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage; I don't know what I say. But she's the best woman in the world.

Fainall: 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Witwoud: No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall.—Your judgment, Mirabell?

Mirabell: You had better step and ask his wife if you would be credibly informed.

Witwoud: Mirabell?

Mirabell: Aye.

Witwoud: My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons—gad, I have forgot what I was going to say to you!

[8] Fruit resembling the crab-apple; edible only when it begins to decay. [9] Caliban; cf. the Dryden-Davenant version of the play, Act III.

Mirabell: I thank you heartily, heartily.

Witwoud: No, but prithee, excuse me—my memory is such a memory.

Mirabell: Have a care of such apologies, Witwoud; for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain either of the spleen[10] or his memory.

Fainall: What have you done with Petulant?

Witwoud: He's reckoning his money —my money it was. I have no luck today.

Fainall: You may allow him to win of you at play, for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee. Since you monopolize the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his, of course.

Mirabell: I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

Witwoud: Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates.—Petulant's my friend, and a very honest fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a smattering—faith and troth, a pretty deal of an odd sort of a small wit. Nay, I'll do him justice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him.—And if he had any judgment in the world, he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

Fainall: You don't take your friend to be over-nicely bred?

Witwoud: No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own —no more breeding than a bumbaily, that I grant you—'tis pity, faith; the fellow has fire and life.

Mirabell: What, courage?

Witwoud: Hum, faith I don't know as to that; I can't say as to that. Yes, faith, in a controversy, he'll contradict anybody.

Mirabell: Though 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved?

Witwoud: Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks—we have all our failings. You're too hard upon him—you are, faith. Let me excuse him. I can defend most of his faults, except one or two. One he has, that's the truth on't; if he were my brother, I could not acquit him—that, indeed, I could wish were otherwise.

Mirabell: Aye, marry, what's that, Witwoud?

Witwoud: O pardon me!—Expose the infirmities of my friend?—No, my dear, excuse me there.

Fainall: What! I warrant he's unsincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

Witwoud: No, no, what if he be? 'Tis no matter for that; his wit will excuse that. A wit should no more be sincere than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

Mirabell: Maybe you think him too positive?

Witwoud: No, no, his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

Fainall: Too illiterate?

Witwoud: That? That's his happiness —his want of learning gives him the more opportunities to show his natural parts.

Mirabell: He wants words?

Witwoud: Aye, but I like him for that now, for his want of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

Fainall: He's impudent?

Witwoud: No, that's not it.

Mirabell: Vain?

Witwoud: No.

Mirabell: What! He speaks [illegible] able truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent [illegible]

Witwoud: Truths! ha! ha! [illegible] since you will have it—[illegible] never speaks truth at all—[illegible] will lie like a chamber[illegible] of quality's porter. Now, [illegible]

[*Enter Coachman.*]

Coachman: Is Master [illegible] mistress?

Betty: Yes.

Coachman: Three [illegible] coach would speak [illegible]

[10] Melancholy; bad humor.

Fainall: O brave Petulant!—three!

Betty: I'll tell him.

Coachman: You must bring two dishes of chocolate and a glass of cinnamon-water. [*Exit Coachman.*]

Witwoud: That should be for two fasting strumpets, and a bawd troubled with wind. Now you may know what the three are.

Mirabell: You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

Witwoud: Aye, aye, friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment, or wine without toasting. But to tell you a secret, these are trulls whom he allows coachhire, and something more, by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

Mirabell: How!

Witwoud: You shall see he won't go to 'em, because there's no more company here to take notice of him.—Why, this is nothing to what he used to do; before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself.

Fainall: Call for himself! What dost thou mean?

Witwoud: Mean! Why, he would slip you out of this chocolate-house just when you had been talking to him; as soon as your back was turned—whip, he was gone!—then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and scarf and a mask, slap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice, where he would send in for himself, that is, I mean—call for himself, wait for himself; nay, and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

Mirabell: I confess this is something extraordinary.—I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a-coming.—Oh! I ask his pardon. [*Enter Petulant.*]

Betty: Sir, the coach stays.

Petulant: Well, well; I come.—'Sbud, a man had as good be a professed midwife as a professed whoremaster, at this rate! To be knocked up and raised at all hours, and in all places! Pox on 'em, I won't come!—D'ye hear, tell 'em I won't come—let 'em snivel and cry their hearts out.

Fainall: You are very cruel, Petulant.

Petulant: All's one, let it pass. I have a humor to be cruel.

Mirabell: I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

Petulant: Condition! condition's a dried fig if I am not in humor!—By this hand, if they were your—a—a—your what-d'ye-call-'ems themselves, they must wait or rub off, if I want appetite.

Mirabell: What-d'ye-call-'ems! What are they, Witwoud?

Witwoud: Empresses, my dear: by your what-d'ye-call-'ems he means sultana queens.

Petulant: Aye, Roxolanas.[11]

Mirabell: Cry you mercy.

Fainall: Witwoud says they are—

Petulant: What does he say th' are?

Witwoud: I? Fine ladies, I say.

Petulant: Pass on, Witwoud.—Hark'ee, by this light, his relations—two co-heiresses, his cousins, and an old aunt who loves caterwauling better than a conventicle.[12]

Witwoud: Ha, ha, ha! I had a mind to see how the rogue would come off.—Ha, ha, ha! Gad, I can't be angry with him if he had said they were my mother and my sisters.

Mirabell: No?

Witwoud: No; the rogue's wit and readiness of invention charm me. Dear Petulant!

Betty: They are gone, sir, in great anger.

Petulant: Enough; let 'em trundle. Anger helps complexion—saves paint.

Fainall: This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

Mirabell: Have you not left off your

[11] Sultana in Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes.* [12] A non-conformist religious gathering, reputedly fond of loud worship.

Besides, they never mind him; they say anything before him.

Mirabell: I thought you had been the greatest favorite.

Petulant: Aye, *tête-à-tête*, but not in public, because I make remarks.

Mirabell: Do you?

Petulant: Aye, aye; pox, I'm malicious, man! Now, he's soft, you know; they are not in awe of him—the fellow's well-bred; he's what you call a—what-d'ye-call-'em, a fine gentleman.—But he's silly withal.

Mirabell: I thank you. I know as much as my curiosity requires.—Fainall, are you for the Mall?[15]

Fainall: Aye. I'll take a turn before dinner.

Witwoud: Aye, we'll all walk in the Park; the ladies talked of being there.

Mirabell: I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother Sir Wilfull's arrival.

Witwoud: No, no; he comes to his aunt's, my Lady Wishfort. Pox on him! I shall be troubled with him, too; what shall I do with the fool?

Petulant: Beg him for his estate, that I may beg you afterwards, and so have but one trouble with you both.

Witwoud: Oh, rare Petulant! Thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning. Thou shalt to the Mall with us, and we'll be very severe.

Petulant: Enough! I'm in a humor to be severe.

Mirabell: Are you? Pray then, walk by yourselves: let not us be accessory to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Petulant: What, what? Then let 'em either show their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else show their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

Mirabell: But has not thou then sense enough to know that thou oughtest to be most ashamed thyself when thou hast put another out of countenance?

Petulant: Not I, by this hand!—I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt or ill breeding.

Mirabell: I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill manners, 'tis but fit
That impudence and malice pass for wit. [*Exeunt.*]

[15] Along St. James's Park.

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON ACT I

This first act serves to give us some glimpse into the world in which the action of the play takes place. It is the London of the late seventeenth century: it is a world of coffee-houses and periwigs and elaborately formal dress. But the world of the play is particularized further still: it is an upper-class world, a world of fine ladies and attractive, idle gallants. The world of farms and shops lies all about it but does not enter into it. True, there are servants who bob in and out of it, and later there will appear a rough and hearty squire from the country. But the world is essentially one of fashionable people, gaming, gossiping, pursuing their amours.

The scene revealed in the first act specializes this world one degree further still: certain aspects of the world of society are heightened and emphasized. It is a world which not only sets a great deal of store by brilliance, but also succeeds, to a great degree, in being brilliant. The conversation

is filled with epigrams and neat retorts. Moreover, it is a knowing and sophisticated conversation, full of shrewd and frequently cynical observations on the way in which human beings behave. The characters plume themselves on knowing the "way of the world."

1. In the period in which the action of the play takes place, the coffee-houses and chocolate-houses were very important centers of male society. How does placing the opening scene in a chocolate-house help to indicate the nature of the world of the play?

2. Act I is devoted largely to exposition: of Mirabell's courtship of Millamant; the anger of Lady Wishfort, Millamant's aunt, at Mirabell because of his pretended love for her; the fact that Millamant will lose half her fortune if she marries without her aunt's consent; Marwood's antagonism to Mirabell; there is also a slight hint of a Marwood-Fainall liaison, and even of Fainall's hoping to get Millamant's money. Find the passages in which we are informed about these matters and decide whether the information is conveyed easily and "naturally" Note which matters Congreve tries to clarify by mentioning them more than once.

Note that the information extends, beyond the mere facts, to the tone of the society and therefore of the play which deals with that society. It ... this point we may ... capable of greater ... o with it? Mirabell wants to marry Millamant; presumably he wishes to keep her fortune; he must come to terms with a scheming world, a brilliant world that is hard on fools; he seems a critical observer rather than an ardent lover, and Millamant sounds rather fashionable than romantic. In what terms can a love-story flourish in this milieu? Merely as another trick in a tricky plot? Or in a really convincing, significant way?

3. Why does not the author confine the act to the conversation of two persons, Mirabell and Fainall? Why does he bring in Petulant and Witwoud, who seem to have no major part in the action? What do they add, if anything?

4. Is the wittiness of the conversation meant, in part at least, to keep the retailing of the necessary exposition from becoming dull? Is it successful in this regard? What else does the incessant play of wit do?

5. Are the appearance of the footman and his conversation about his marriage at Pancras merely a bit of mystery-mongering? Mirabell's eagerness to make sure that the marriage has taken place and his evident satisfaction on confirming the news, a satisfaction which Fainall notices, would indicate that Mirabell is planning some sort of scheme Does this liven up the mere retailing of the exposition in this opening act? Does it add forward movement?

... having Mirabell appear as the rather ... Mirabell's real attitude ... diminish the possibility of the love-plot's producing a sentimental effect?

7. What is gained by Congreve's postponing our introduction to the heroine, Millamant? Of our introduction to her aunt, Lady Wishfort?

8. Analyze the wit in Mirabell's account of his making love to Lady Wishfort and in the passage characterizing Sir Wilfull. Is it in any way reminiscent of the wit in *Lady Windermere's Fan?*

ACT II

[SCENE: St. James's Park.]

[*Enter Mrs. Fainall and Mrs. Marwood.*]

Mrs. Fainall: Aye, aye, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes—either doting or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies are insupportable; and when they cease to love—(we ought to think at least) they loathe; they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as from such, fly from us.

Mrs. Marwood: True, 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life, that love should ever die before us and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left than never to have been loved. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life because they once must leave us, is as preposterous as to wish to have been born old because we one day must be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

Mrs. Fainall: Then it seems you dissemble an aversion to mankind only in compliance to my mother's humor?

Mrs. Marwood: Certainly. To be free; I have no taste of those insipid dry discourses with which our sex of force must entertain themselves apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to dote like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts and every heart, or soon or late, receive and readmit him as its lawful tyrant.

Mrs. Fainall: Bless me, how have I been deceived! Why, you profess a libertine.

Mrs. Marwood: You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere; acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

Mrs. Fainall: Never!

Mrs. Marwood: You hate mankind?

Mrs. Fainall: Heartily, inveterately.

Mrs. Marwood: Your husband?

Mrs. Fainall: Most transcendently; aye, though I say it, meritoriously.

Mrs. Marwood: Give me your hand upon it.

Mrs. Fainall: There.

Mrs. Marwood: I join with you; what I have said has been to try you.

Mrs. Fainall: Is it possible? Dost thou hate those vipers, men?

Mrs. Marwood: I have done hating 'em, and am now come to despise 'em; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

Mrs. Fainall: There spoke the spirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea!

Mrs. Marwood: And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion further.

Mrs. Fainall: How?

Mrs. Marwood: Faith, by marrying; if I could but find one that loved me very well and would be thoroughly sensible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the violence of undergoing the ceremony.

Mrs. Fainall: You would not make him a cuckold?

Mrs. Marwood: No; but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

Mrs. Fainall: Why had not you as good do it?

Mrs. Marwood: Oh, if he should ever discover it, he would then know the worst and be out of his pain; but I

would have him ever to continue upon the rack of fear and jealousy.

Mrs. Fainall: Ingenious mischief! would thou wert married to Mirabell.

Mrs. Marwood: Would I were!

Mrs. Fainall You change color.

Mrs. Marwood: Because I hate him.

Mrs. Fainall: So do I, but I can hear him named. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

Mrs. Marwood I never loved him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

Mrs. Fainall· By the reason you give for your aversion, one would think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies must acquit him.

Mrs. Marwood: Oh, then it seems you are one of his favorable enemies! Methinks you look a little pale—and now you flush again.

Mrs. Fainall: Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the sudden.

Mrs. Marwood: What ails you?

Mrs. Fainall: My husband. Don't you see him? He turned short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me. [*Enter Fainall and Mirabell.*]

Mrs. Marwood· Ha, ha, ha! He comes opportunely for you.

Mrs. Fainall: For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fainall: [*To Mrs. Fainall.*] My dear!

Mrs. Fainall: My soul!

Fainall: You don't look well to-day, child.

Mrs. Fainall: D'ye think so?

Mirabell: He is the only man that does, madam.

Mrs. Fainall: The only man that would tell me so, at least, and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

Fainall. Oh, my dear, I am satisfied of your tenderness; I know you cannot resent anything from me, especially what is an effect of my concern.

Mrs. Fainall. Mr. Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation last night; I would fain hear it out.

Mirabell: The persons concerned in that affair have yet a tolerable reputation. I am afraid Mr. Fainall will be censorious.

Mrs. Fainall: He has a humor more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispense with the hearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr. Mirabell, and I dare promise you will oblige us both. [*Exeunt Mrs. Fainall and Mirabell.*]

Fainall. Excellent creature! Well, sure if I should live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

Mrs. Marwood: Aye?

Fainall: For having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it, of consequence, must put an end to all my hopes; and what a wretch is he who must survive his hopes! Nothing remains when that day comes but to sit down and weep like Alexander when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

Mrs. Marwood Will you not follow 'em?

Fainall: Faith, I think not.

Mrs. Marwood: Pray, let us; I have a reason.

Fainall: You are not jealous?

Mrs. Marwood: Of whom?

Fainall: Of Mirabell.

Mrs. Marwood: If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you that I am tender of your honor?

Fainall: You would intimate, then, as if[there] were a fellow-feeling between my wife and him.

Mrs. Marwood: I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought

Fainall: But he, I fear, is too insensible.

Mrs. Marwood: It may be you are deceived.

Fainall: It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it

Mrs. Marwood What?

Fainall: That I have been deceived, madam, and you are false.

Mrs. Marwood: That I am false! What mean you?

Fainall: To let you know I see through all your little arts.—Come, you both love him, and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another have made you clash till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession reddening on your cheeks and sparkling from your eyes.

Mrs. Marwood: You do me wrong.

Fainall: I do not. 'Twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him by my wife, that by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

Mrs. Marwood: And wherewithal can you reproach me?

Fainall: With infidelity, with loving another—with love of Mirabell.

Mrs. Marwood: 'Tis false! I challenge you to show an instance that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him!

Fainall: And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance!—the injuries you have done him are a proof—your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion?—to undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

Mrs. Marwood: My obligations to my lady urged me. I had professed a friendship to her, and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

Fainall: What, was it conscience, then? Professed a friendship! Oh, the pious friendships of the female sex!

Mrs. Marwood: More tender, more sincere, and more enduring than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us or mutual faith to one another.

Fainall: Ha, ha, ha! You are my wife's friend, too.

Mrs. Marwood: Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you upbraid me? Have I been false to her, through strict fidelity to you, and sacrificed my friendship to keep my love inviolate? And have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit? To you it should be meritorious that I have been vicious: and do you reflect that guilt upon me which should lie buried in your bosom?

Fainall: You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once could make of strictest ties when set in competition with your love to me.

Mrs. Marwood: 'Tis false; you urged it with deliberate malice! 'Twas spoken in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

Fainall: Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealousy; but you are stung to find you are discovered.

Mrs. Marwood: It shall be all discovered.—You too shall be discovered; be sure you shall. I can but be exposed.—If I do it *myself* I *shall* prevent your baseness.

Fainall: Why, what will you do?

Mrs. Marwood: Disclose it to your wife; own what has passed between us.

Fainall: Frenzy!

Mrs. Marwood: By all my wrongs I'll do't!—I'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune! With both I trusted you,—you, bankrupt in honor, as indigent of wealth.

Fainall: Your fame I have preserved. Your fortune has been bestowed as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures which we both have shared. Yet, had not you been false, I had ere this repaid it—'tis true. Had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have stolen their marriage, my lady had been incensed beyond all means of reconcilement; Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune, which then would

have descended to my wife—and wherefore did I marry but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

Mrs. Marwood: Deceit and frivolous pretence!

Fainall: Death, am I not married? What's pretence? Am I not imprisoned, fettered? Have I not a wife?—nay, a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to bustle through the ways of wedlock and this world! Will you yet be reconciled to truth and me?

Mrs. Marwood: Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent—I hate you, and shall forever.

Fainall: For loving you?

Mrs. Marwood: I loathe the name of love after such usage; and next to the guilt with which you would asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewell!

Fainall: Nay, we must not part thus.

Mrs. Marwood: Let me go.

Fainall: Come, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Marwood: I care not—let me go—break my hands, do! I'd leave 'em to get loose.

Fainall: I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

Mrs. Marwood: Well, I have deserved it all.

Fainall: You know I love you.

Mrs. Marwood. Poor dissembling!—Oh, that—well, it is not yet—

Fainall: What? What is it not? What is it not yet? It is not yet too late—

Mrs. Marwood. No, it is not yet too late—I have that comfort

Fainall: It is, to love another.

[illegible]

Come, I ask your pardon—no tears—I was to blame, I could not love you and be easy in my doubts. Pray, forbear—I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong, and any way, every way will make amends. I'll hate my wife yet more, damn her! I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere—anywhere—to another world. I'll marry thee—be pacified.—'Sdeath, they come! Hide your face, your tears.—You have a mask; wear it a moment. This way, this way—be persuaded. [*Exeunt.*] [*Enter Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall.*]

Mrs. Fainall: They are here yet.

Mirabell: They are turning into the other walk.

Mrs. Fainall: While I only hated my husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despised him, he's too offensive.

Mirabell: Oh, you should hate with prudence.

Mrs. Fainall: Yes, for I have loved with indiscretion.

Mirabell: You should have just so much disgust for your husband as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

Mrs. Fainall: You have been the cause that I have loved without bounds, and would you set limits to that aversion of which you have been the occasion? Why did you make me marry this man?

Mirabell: Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? To save that idol, reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and a designing lover, yet one whose wit and outward fair behavior have gained a reputation with the town enough to make that woman stand excused who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

Mrs. Millamant: How so?

Mirabell: To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised, and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Witwoud: But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait till she dies before it can catch her last words.

Mrs. Millamant: Oh, fiction!—Fainall, let us leave these men.

Mirabell: [*Aside to Mrs. Fainall.*] Draw off Witwoud.

Mrs. Fainall: Immediately.—[*Aloud.*] I have a word or two for Mr. Witwoud. [*Exeunt Witwoud and Mrs. Fainall.*]

Mirabell: [*To Mrs. Millamant.*] I would beg a little private audience too. —You had the tyranny to deny me last night, though you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concerned my love.

Mrs. Millamant: You saw I was engaged.

Mirabell: Unkind! You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools—things who visit you from their excessive idleness, bestowing on your easiness that time which is the encumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you; they are not capable—or if they were, it should be to you as a mortification, for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Mrs. Millamant: I please myself. Besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

Mirabell: Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

Mrs. Millamant: Yes, the vapors; fools are physic for it, next to asafœtida.

Mirabell: You are not in a course of fools?

Mrs. Millamant: Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom, you'll displease me.—I think I must resolve, after all, not to have you; we shan't agree.

Mirabell: Not in our physic, it may be.

Mrs. Millamant: And yet our distemper, in all likelihood, will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults—I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell,—I'm resolved—I think—you may go.—Ha, ha, ha! What would you give, that you could help loving me?

Mirabell: I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.

Mrs. Millamant: Come, don't look grave, then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mirabell: I say that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman by plain dealing and sincerity.

Mrs. Millamant: Sententious Mirabell! Prithee, don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.

Mirabell: You are merry, madam, but I would persuade you for a moment to be serious.

Mrs. Millamant: What, with that face? No, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a lovesick face. Ha, ha, ha!—Well, I won't laugh; don't be peevish—Heigho! now I'll be melancholy—as melancholy as a watch-light.[4] Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me, woo me now.—Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well; I see they are walking away.

Mirabell: Can you not find in the variety of your disposition one moment—

Mrs. Millamant: To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to speed? No.

Mirabell: But how came you to know it?

Mrs. Millamant: Without the help of

[4] A candle in a sick room.

the devil, you can't imagine—unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me. [*Exit Mrs. Millamant.*]

Mirabell: I have something more!—Gone!—Think of you? To think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation—a very tranquillity of mind and mansion. A fellow that lives in a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man that is lodged in a woman There is no point of the compass to which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turned; and by one as well as another. For motion, not method, is their occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play the fool by the force of instinct —*Oh, here come my pair of turtles!*—What, billing so sweetly! Is not Valentine's Day over with you yet? [*Enter Waitwell and Foible.*] Sirrah Waitwell, why, sure you think you were married for your own recreation, and not for my conveniency

Waitwell. Your pardon, sir. With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, sir. I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way

Mirabell: Give you joy, Mrs Foible

Foible Oh, 'las, sir, I'm so ashamed!—I'm afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me But I protest, sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Waitwell That she did indeed, sir It was my fault that she did not make more

Mirabell: That I believe

Foible But I told my lady as you instructed me, sir, that I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland, your uncle, and that I would put her ladyship's picture in my pocket to show him, which I'll be sure to say has made him so enamored of her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship's feet and worship the original.

Mirabell. Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

Waitwell. I think she has profited, sir; I think so.

Foible: You have seen Madam Millamant, sir?

Mirabell: Yes.

Foible: I told her, sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

Mirabell: Your diligence will merit more—in the meantime—[*Gives money.*]

Foible O dear sir, your humble servant!

Waitwell [*Putting forth his hand.*] Spouse

Mirabell. Stand off, sir, not a penny! —*Go on and prosper, Foible—the lease* shall be made good and the farm stocked if we succeed

Foible I don't question your generosity, sir, and you need not doubt of success If you have no more commands, sir, *I'll be gone, I'm sure my lady is at* her toilet, and can't dress till I come —Oh, dear, [*looking out*] I'm sure that was Mrs Marwood that went by in a mask! If she has seen me with you, I'm sure she'll tell my lady I'll make haste home and prevent her Your servant, sir —Bye, Waitwell [*Exit Foible*]

Waitwell Sir Rowland, if you please —The jade's so pert upon her preferment she forgets herself

Mirabell Come, sir, will you endeavor to forget yourself, and transform into Sir Rowland?

Waitwell Why, sir, it will be impossible I should remember myself —Married, knighted, and attended all in one day! 'tis enough to make any man forget himself The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance and familiarity with my former self, and fall from my transformation to a reforma-

tion into Waitwell. Nay, I shan't be quite the same Waitwell neither; for now, I remember me, I'm married and can't be my own man again.

Aye, there's the grief; that's the sad
change of life,
To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.
[*Exeunt.*]

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON ACT II

We have seen how Act I is devoted largely to exposition and to establishing of tone. Act II really continues the process, for here we learn of the relations of Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall, of Mrs. Fainall and her husband, of Mrs. Marwood's relation to Mirabell and Fainall, and of Fainall's having an eye on Millamant's money. Indeed, the play may hardly be said to go forward in this act, for little "happens" except that Foible and Waitwell, having been married, report to Mirabell for orders. Mirabell's conspiracy—about which we learn more—is launched, though it does not really influence the action before Act III. And at best it is only a part of the main action—Mirabell's suit to Millamant.

Two questions will probably occur to the reader: (1) Is the play too slow in starting? (2) Does the plot become too much involved? Some people who saw the play in 1700 felt that the plot was too slight. We know, for example, that a Lady Marow wrote at the time to an acquaintance in the country: "'The Way of the World,' Congreve's new play, doth not answer expectation, there being no plot in it but many witty things to ridicule the Chocolate House, and the fantastical part of the world."

As for slowness: we may assume that Congreve wished to allow us ample time in which to become acquainted with the characters and their complex relationships. In the latter half of the play events occur with breath-taking rapidity; one reversal of situation hurries upon another. It may be argued that their effectiveness is increased by the rather leisurely beginning. A more important point, perhaps, is that the brilliant wit of a good deal of the first two acts is—as Congreve may have hoped—a partial compensation for our not having a sharper sense of forward movement. The wit offers a kind of tension and intellectual movement of its own. But the fact is that we still do not have as definite a sense of dramatic forces and direction as we might have.

As for complexity of plot: whatever Lady Marow may have meant by the "fantastical part of the world," certainly the complication of the love affairs to which we are introduced borders on the fantastical. The tangle is possible, of course, but it hardly seems probable. Yet this we should take into account: that Congreve is engaged in heightening and stylizing what is already a heightened and artificial world. He is not thereby freed, of course, from his responsibility to give us a world which has some relation to the world of human nature which we know; that is, there must be some level on which the world of the play is not merely a distorted and unnatural world. But, here again, noticing the special character of his material, we may be willing to suspend judgment and wait. A fine caricature

may hit off a character as well as a fine portrait or a good photograph. We are willing to let the caricaturist falsify details—even violate the natural order of things—if he knows what he is doing and if his caricature as a whole does give us the subject. [illegible]

Congreve is, as a matter of fact, using a sort of caricature as his method rather than attempting to give us a scientifically accurate picture of life among the upper classes in 1700. Petulant, for instance, is doubtless more foppish than any real fop. Mirabell is probably a little more studiedly detached than any lover is likely to be—then or now. Congreve is obviously laughing at his sophisticated world, and the tangle of relationships which he exhibits is one way of suggesting that that world is artificial, too devious, over-sophisticated. (The method, however, does not debar [illegible]

Another aspect of the complexity of relationships, however, and one which equally demands our attention, is the purely technical problem of how clearly that complexity is conveyed to the reader. If the reader or audience remains constantly confused, that fact obviously militates somewhat against the total effectiveness of the work. At this point we are ready to note one part of Congreve's method which undoubtedly creates considerable difficulty for us: more than any playwright whom we have studied, [illegible] to us what [illegible] d Fainall [illegible] us. Nor is the talk idle chat: we are obviously meant to be identifying, and learning things about, these otherwise unknown characters. With *five* of them, we are not aided by a personal appearance until Act II; *two* do not appear until Act III. Thus Act I imposes an almost unbearable weight of attention upon the audience; and a reader is often called upon to go back, sort out, and study the various pieces of information which he has been given. In no other play in this book has an author demanded such active and intense collaboration from his readers. (We may observe, too, that the wit which is shared by almost all the characters, even some of the servants, tends to blur out such distinctions as are made among the characters. Compare *Lady Windermere's Fan*, where, from the start, we have a relatively "straight" character, Lady Windermere, as the focal point for a good deal of the action.)

By now it is clear, therefore, that the reader who wishes to cooperate successfully with the author must be unusually alert in looking for passages that convey important information. Of course, in all mature literature, a high degree of alertness is essential; here, however, it is required, not only for the *meaning*, but also for plain *matters of fact* which usually we may take for granted.

1. At the beginning of this act Mrs. Fainall and Mrs Marwood dis-

cuss their attitudes toward Mirabell and toward the male sex generally. How do their speeches bear upon the central problem of the play?

2. Is the quarrel between Mrs. Marwood and Fainall in this act too bitter for the tone of a gay comedy? What is its function in the play? Does it contribute to the tone? Does it serve notice that the issues of this play are "serious" ones, after all?

3. What does the banter between Mirabell and Millamant (p. 405a, 44 ff.) reveal: that Millamant is really cruel? That she loves power, or that she is fearful that a wife has no power? Does Mirabell really believe that beauty is the gift of the lover, or is he, on the other hand, fearful lest this turn out to be true indeed? Are these people in love with each other? How seriously are we to take the speech which Mirabell utters just after Millamant has left him?

4. To Mirabell's question, "What, billing so sweetly! Is not Valentine's Day over with you yet?" Waitwell the servant answers: "With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, sir." In what ways does the speech make an ironic commentary on the concerns of the play: on the love affairs of the fashionable? On the way of the world? On the institution of marriage? On the hopes of Millamant and Mirabell?

5. What is ironic in the way in which Mr. and Mrs. Fainall address each other on their first meeting in the act (p. 401a, 33 ff.)?

6. How much insight into human motives and impulses does Fainall appear to have?

7. In the interview between Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall (p. 403b, 15 ff.), do you find anything in Mrs. Fainall's character difficult to explain? Is she too spiritless?

8. Analyze the source of the humor in Millamant's lines about pinning up her hair (p. 405a, 21 ff.). Beneath the fooling, is any serious discrimination among lovers implied?

9. Millamant openly says that she likes "to give pain" (p. 405b, 2–3). What does the fact that she says this tell us about her character?

10. What lines in the final speeches of Mirabell, Foible, and Waitwell are meant to direct our attention to coming actions?

11. Note how a series of witticisms sometimes develops from a single concept or image, e.g., "want of breath" (p. 404b, 29 ff.); and health and disease (p. 406a, 38 ff.).

ACT III

[SCENE: A room in Lady Wishfort's house.]

[*Lady Wishfort at her toilet, Peg waiting.*]

Lady Wishfort: Merciful! no news of Foible yet?

Peg: No, madam.

Lady Wishfort: I have no more patience.—If I have not fretted myself till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me! Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, sweetheart?—An arrant ash-color, as I am a person! Look you how this wench stirs! Why dost thou not fetch me a little red? Didst thou not hear me, Mopus?[1]

[1] Cf. modern "dope."

Peg: The red ratafia, does your ladyship mean, or the cherry-brandy?

Lady Wishfort: Ratafia, fool! No, fool. Not the ratafia, fool—grant me patience!—I mean the Spanish paper,[1] idiot—complexion, darling. Paint, paint, paint!—dost thou understand that, changeling, dangling thy hands [illegible] bobbins before thee? Why dost tho[illegible] stir, puppet? Thou wooden thing [illegible] wires!

Peg: Lord, madam, your ladysh[illegible] so impatient!—I cannot come at the paint, madam; Mrs. Foible has locked it up and carried the key with her.

Lady Wishfort: A pox take you both!—Fetch me the cherry-brandy then. [*Exit Peg.*] I'm as pale and as faint, I look like Mrs. Qualmsick, the curate's wife, that's always breeding.—Wench! Come, come, wench, what art thou doing? Sipping? Tasting?—Save thee, dost thou not know the bottle? [*Enter Peg with a bottle and china cup.*]

Peg: Madam, I was looking for a cup.

Lady Wishfort: A cup, save thee! and what a cup hast thou brought!—Dost [illegible] nutmeg?—I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill!—So—again —[*One knocks.*]—See who that is.—Set down the bottle first. —Here, here, under the table.—What, wouldst thou go with the bottle in thy hand, like a tapster? As I'm a person, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road before she came to me, like Maritornes the Asturian in *Don Quixote*!—No Foible yet?

Peg: No, madam, Mrs. Marwood

Lady Wishfort: Oh, Marwood, let her come in.—Come in, good Marwood. [*Enter Mrs. Marwood.*]

Mrs. Marwood: I'm surprised to find your ladyship in dishabille at this time of day.

Lady Wishfort: Foible's a lost thing— has been abroad since morning, and never heard of since.

Mrs. Marwood: I saw her but now as I came masked through the park, in conference with Mirabell.

Lady Wishfort: With Mirabell!—You call my blood into my face, with men[illegible] have [illegible] ruined. Oh, my dear friend, [illegible] wretch of wretches if I'm detected.

Mrs. Marwood: O madam, you cannot suspect Mrs. Foible's integrity.

Lady Wishfort: Oh, he carries poison in his tongue that would corrupt integrity itself! If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood, what's integrity to an opportunity?—Hark! I hear her! [*To Peg.*] Go, you thing, and send her in [*Exit Peg*] [*To Mrs. Marwood*] Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom —You'll pardon [illegible] [illegible]nd, I can make bold with [illegible] are books over the chim[illegible] and Prynne, and *The* [illegible] *the Stage*, with Bunyan's works, to entertain you. [*Exit Mrs. Marwood*] [*Enter Foible*]

Lady Wishfort. O Foible, where hast thou been? What hast thou been doing?

Foible. Madam, I have seen the party.

Lady Wishfort: But what hast thou done?

Foible. Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do, I have only promised. But a man so enamored—so transported!—Well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin—poor Sir Rowland, I say

Lady Wishfort. The miniature has been counted like—but hast thou not betrayed me, Foible? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell? What hadst thou to do with him in the Park? Answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

Foible [*Aside*] So the devil has been

[1] Cosmetic.

beforehand with me. What shall I say? —[*Aloud.*]—Alas, madam, could I help it if I met that confident thing? Was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I'm sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst, I could have borne; but he had a fling at your ladyship too. And then I could not hold, but i'faith I gave him his own.

Lady Wishfort: Me? What did the filthy fellow say?

Foible: Oh, madam! 'tis a shame to say what he said—with his taunts and his fleers, tossing up his nose. Humh! (says he) what, you are a hatching some plot (says he), you are so early abroad, or catering (says he), ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant.—Half-pay is but thin subsistence (says he)—well, what pension does your lady propose? Let me see (says he); what, she must come down pretty deep now, she's superannuated (says he) and—

Lady Wishfort: Odds my life, I'll have him—I'll have him murdered! I'll have him poisoned! Where does he eat?—I'll marry a drawer [3] to have him poisoned in his wine. I'll send for Robin from Locket's [4] immediately.

Foible: Poison him! poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, madam, starve him: marry Sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. Oh, you would bless yourself to hear what he said!

Lady Wishfort: A villain! Superannuated!

Foible: Humh (says he), I hear you are laying designs against me too (says he), and Mrs. Millamant is to marry my uncle (he does not suspect a word of your ladyship); but (says he) I'll fit you for that. I warrant you (says he) I'll hamper you for that (says he)—you and your old frippery [5] too (says he); I'll handle you—

Lady Wishfort: Audacious villain! Handle me, would he durst!—Frippery? old frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouthed fellow? I'll be married tomorrow; I'll be contracted to-night.

Foible: The sooner the better, madam.

Lady Wishfort: Will Sir Rowland be here, sayest thou? When, Foible?

Foible: Incontinently, madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband after knighthood with that impatience in which Sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

Lady Wishfort: Frippery! superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags! a tatterdemalion! I hope to see him hung with tatters, like a Long-lane [6] penthouse or a gibbet thief. A slander-mouthed railer! I warrant the spendthrift prodigal's in debt as much as the million lottery, or the whole court upon a birthday. I'll spoil his credit with his tailor. Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall.

Foible: He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate [7] first, and angle into Blackfriars for brass farthings with an old mitten.[8]

Lady Wishfort: Aye, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features to receive Sir Rowland with any economy of face. This wretch has fretted me that I am absolutely decayed. Look, Foible.

Foible: Your ladyship has frowned a little too rashly; indeed, madam. There are some cracks discernible in the white varnish.

Lady Wishfort: Let me see the glass.—Cracks, sayest thou?—why, I am arrantly flayed—I look like an old peeled wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before Sir Rowland comes, or I shall never keep up to my picture.

Foible: I warrant you, madam, a little art once made your picture like you, and

[3] Bartender. [4] A restaurant. [5] Junk; old clothes; second-hand clothing store.

[6] Long-lane: center of old clothes trade. [7] Debtors' prison. [8] Using a cord, let down a mitten to collect alms.

now a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must sit for you, madam.

Lady Wishfort: But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will he not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be importunate, I shall never break decorums—I shall die with confusion if I am forced to advance.—Oh, no, I can never advance!—I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy, neither.—I won't give him despair—but a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

Foible: A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

Lady Wishfort: Yes, but tenderness becomes me best—a sort of dyingness—you see that picture has a sort of a—ha, Foible? a swimmingness in the eye—yes, I'll look so.—My niece affects it, but she wants features. Is Sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed—I'll dress above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here.—Is he handsome? Don't answer me. I won't know; I'll be surprised. I'll be taken by surprise.

Foible: By storm, madam. Sir Rowland's a brisk man.

Lady Wishfort: Is he? Oh, then he'll importune, if he's a brisk man. I shall save decorums if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal terror at the apprehension of offending against decorums. Oh, I'm glad he's a brisk man! —Let my things be removed, good Foible. [*Exit Lady Wishfort.*] [*Enter Mrs. Fainall.*]

Mrs. Fainall: Oh, Foible, I have been in a fright lest I should come too late! That devil Marwood saw you in the Park with Mirabell, and I'm afraid will discover it to my lady.

Foible: Discover what, madam?

Mrs. Fainall: Nay, nay, put not on that strange face! I am privy to the whole design and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to personate Mirabell's uncle, and as such, winning my lady, to involve her in those difficulties from which Mirabell only must release her, by his making his conditions to have my cousin and her fortune left to her own disposal.

Foible: Oh, dear madam, I beg your pardon. It was not my confidence in your ladyship that was deficient, but I thought the former good correspondence between your ladyship and Mr. Mirabell might have hindered his communicating this secret.

Mrs. Fainall: Dear Foible, forget that.

Foible: O dear madam, Mr. Mirabell is such a sweet, winning gentleman—but your ladyship is the pattern of generosity.—Sweet lady, to be so good! Mr. Mirabell cannot choose but be grateful. I find your ladyship has his heart still. Now, madam, I can safely tell your ladyship our success: Mrs. Marwood had told my lady, but I warrant I managed myself. I turned it all for the better. I told my lady that Mr. Mirabell railed at her; I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my lady is so incensed that she'll be contracted to Sir Rowland to-night, she says. I warrant I worked her up, that he may have her for asking for, as they say of a Welsh maidenhead.

Mrs. Fainall. O rare Foible!

Foible: Madam, I beg your ladyship to acquaint Mr. Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him: besides, I believe Madam Marwood watches me.—She has a month's mind*; but I know Mr. Mirabell can't abide her.—[*Enter Footman.*] *John*, remove my lady's toilet.—Madam, your servant: my lady is so impatient I fear she'll come for me if I stay.

Mrs. Fainall: I'll go with you up the back stairs lest I should meet her. [*Exeunt.*] [*Enter Mrs. Marwood.*]

* Desire.

Mrs. Marwood: Indeed, Mrs. Engine, is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this importance?—Yes, I shall watch you. Why, this wench is the *passe-partout*, a very master-key to everybody's strong-box. My friend Fainall, have you carried it so swimmingly? I thought there was something in it, but it seems it's over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of appetite, then, but from a surfeit. Else you could never be so cool to fall from a principal to be an assistant,—to procure for him! A pattern of generosity, that, I confess. Well, Mr. Fainall, you have met with your match.—O man, man! Woman, woman! The devil's an ass: if I were a painter, I would draw him like an idiot, a driveller with a bib and bells. Man should have his head and horns,[10] and woman the rest of him. Poor simple fiend!—"Madam Marwood has a month's mind, but he can't abide her."—'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair, without you could have kept his counsel closer. I shall not prove another pattern of generosity; he has not obliged me to that with those excesses of himself! And now I'll have none of him.—Here comes the good lady, panting ripe, with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chemist[11] upon the day of projection. [*Enter Lady Wishfort.*]

Lady Wishfort: Oh, dear Marwood, what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness?—but my dear friend is all goodness.

Mrs. Marwood: No apologies, dear madam; I have been very well entertained.

Lady Wishfort: As I'm a person, I am in a very chaos to think I should so forget myself: but I have such an olio[12] of affairs, really I know not what to do. —[*Calls.*] Foible!—I expect my nephew, Sir Wilfull, every moment, too.—[*Calls again.*] Why, Fobile!—He means to travel for improvement.

[10] Symbol of a man with an unfaithful wife.
[11] Alchemist. [12] Mixture; muddle.

Mrs. Marwood: Methinks Sir Wilfull should rather think of marrying than travelling, at his years. I hear he is turned of forty.

Lady Wishfort: Oh, he's in less danger of being spoiled by his travels—I am against my nephew's marrying too young. It will be time enough when he comes back and has acquired discretion to choose for himself.

Mrs. Marwood: Methinks Mrs. Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards.—'Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

Lady Wishfort: I promise you I have thought on't—and since 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will. I value your judgment extremely. On my word, I'll propose it. [*Enter Foible.*]

Lady Wishfort: Come, come, Foible—I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner. I must make haste.

Foible: Mr. Witwoud and Mr. Petulant are come to dine with your ladyship.

Lady Wishfort: Oh, dear, I can't appear till I'm dressed! Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain 'em? I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me. [*Exeunt Lady Wishfort and Foible.*] [*Enter Mrs. Millamant and Mincing.*]

Mrs. Millamant: Sure never anything was so unbred as that odious man!—Marwood, your servant.

Mrs. Marwood: You have a color; what's the matter?

Mrs. Millamant: That horrid fellow, Petulant, has provoked me into a flame: I have broken my fan.—Mincing, lend me yours. Is not all the powder out of my hair?

Mrs. Marwood: No. What has he done?

Mrs. Millamant: Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talked—nay, he has said nothing neither, but he has contradicted everything that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwoud and he would have quarrelled.

Mincing: I vow, mem, I thought once they would have fit.

Mrs. Millamant Well, 'tis a lamentable thing, I swear, that one has not the liberty of choosing one's acquaintance as one does one's clothes.

Mrs. Marwood: If we had that liberty, we should be as weary of one set of acquaintance, though never so good, as we are of one suit, though never so fine. A fool and a doily stuff would now and then find days of grace, and be worn for variety.

Mrs. Millamant: I could consent to wear 'em if they would wear alike; but fools never wear out—they are such *drap du Berri*[13] things. Without one could give 'em to one's chambermaid after a day or two!

Mrs. Marwood: 'Twere better so indeed. Or what think you of the playhouse? A fine, gay, glossy fool should be given there, like a new masking habit, after the masquerade is over and we have done with the disguise For a fool's visit is always a disguise, and never admitted by a woman of wit but to blind her affair with a lover of sense. If you would but appear barefaced now, and own Mirabell, you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwoud as your hood and scarf. And indeed, 'tis time, for the town has found it; the secret is grown too big for the pretence. 'Tis like Mrs. Primly's great belly, she may lace it down before, but it burnishes[14] on her hips. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it than my Lady Strammel can her face—that goodly face, which, in defiance of her Rhenish-wine tea,[15] will not be comprehended in a mask.

Mrs. Millamant: I'll take my death,

up—My aunt is not dressing, their folly is less provoking than your

malice. [*Exit Mincing*.]—The town has found it! what has it found? That Mirabell loves me is no more a secret than it is a secret that you discovered it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discovered it is a secret.

Mrs. Marwood: You are nettled.

Mrs. Millamant: You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

Mrs. Marwood: Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

Mrs. Millamant: Oh, silly! ha, ha, ha! I could laugh immoderately.—Poor Mirabell! His constancy to me has quite destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear, I never enjoined it him to be so coy. If I had the vanity to think he would obey me, I would command him to show more gallantry—

Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh—ha, ha, ha!—though I grant you 'tis a little barbarous—ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Marwood What pity 'tis, so much fine raillery and delivered with so significant gesture, should be so unhappily directed to miscarry.

Mrs Millamant Ha! Dear creature, I ask your pardon I swear, I did not mind you

Mrs. Marwood. Mr Mirabell and you both may think it a thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you—

Mrs Millamant Oh dear, what? for it is the same thing if I hear it—ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Marwood. That I detest him, hate him, madam

Mrs Millamant O, Madam! why, so

laugh-

if I am

not amazed to think what he can see in me I'll take my death, I think you are

be.—Well, that thought makes me melancholic.—Now I'll be sad.

Mrs. Marwood: Your merry note may be changed sooner than you think.

Mrs. Millamant: D'ye say so? Then I'm resolved I'll have a song to keep up my spirits. [*Enter Mincing.*]

Mincing: The gentlemen stay but to comb, madam, and will wait on you.

Mrs. Millamant: Desire Mrs.——that is in the next room to sing the song I would have learned yesterday.—You shall hear it, madam—not that there's any great matter in it, but 'tis agreeable to my humor.

Song

1

Love's but the frailty of the mind,
When 'tis not with ambition joined;
A sickly flame, which, if not fed, expires,
And feeding, wastes in self-consuming fires.

2

'Tis not to wound a wanton boy
Or amorous youth, that gives the joy;
But 'tis the glory to have pierced a swain,
For whom inferior beauties sighed in vain.

3

Then I alone the conquest prize,
When I insult a rival's eyes:
If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart, which others bleed for, bleed for me.

[*Enter Petulant and Witwoud.*]

Mrs. Millamant: Is your animosity composed, gentlemen?

Witwoud: Raillery, raillery, madam; we have no animosity—we hit off a little wit now and then, but no animosity. The falling out of wits is like the falling out of lovers. We agree in the main, like treble and bass. Ha, Petulant?

Petulant: Aye, in the main—but when I have a humor to contradict—

Witwoud: Aye, when he has a humor to contradict, then I contradict, too. What! I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battledores; for contradictions beget one another like Jews.

Petulant: If he says black's black—if I have a humor to say 'tis blue—let that pass—all's one for that. If I have a humor to prove it, it must be granted.

Witwoud: Not positively must—but it may—it may.

Petulant: Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

Witwoud: Aye, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may.—That's a logical distinction now, madam.

Mrs. Marwood: I perceive your debates are of importance and very learnedly handled.

Petulant: Importance is one thing, and learning's another. But a debate's a debate; that I assert.

Witwoud: Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

Petulant: No, I'm no enemy to learning. It hurts not me.

Mrs. Marwood: That's a sign indeed it's no enemy to you.

Petulant: No, no, it's no enemy to anybody but them that have it.

Mrs. Millamant: Well, an illiterate man's my aversion. I wonder at the impudence of any illiterate man to offer to make love.

Witwoud: That I confess I wonder at, too.

Mrs. Millamant: Ah! to marry an ignorant that can hardly read or write!

Petulant: Why should a man be any further from being married, though he can't read, than he is from being hanged? The ordinary's[16] paid for setting the psalm, and the parish priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow in both cases, a man may do it without book—so all's one for that.

Mrs. Millamant: D'ye hear the creature?—Lord, here's company, I'll be gone. [*Exeunt Mrs. Millamant and Mincing.*] [*Enter Sir Wilfull Witwoud in a country riding habit, and Servant to Lady Wishfort.*]

Witwoud: In the name of Bartlemew and his fair,[17] what have we here?

[16] Chaplain. [17] Bartholomew Fair, held annually in Smithfield.

Mrs. Marwood: 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Witwoud: Not I.—Yes, I think it is he—I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the Revolution.

Servant: [*To Sir Wilfull.*] Sir, my lady's dressing. Here's company; if you please to walk in, in the meantime.

Sir Wilfull: Dressing! What, it's but morning here I warrant, with you in London; we should count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropshire.—Why, then belike my aunt han't dined yet—ha, friend?

Servant: Your aunt, sir?

Sir Wilfull: My aunt, sir! Yes, my aunt, sir, and your lady, sir; your lady is my aunt, sir.—Why, what! Dost thou not know me, friend? Why, then send somebody hither that does. How long hast thou lived with thy lady, fellow,—ha?

Servant: A week, sir—longer than anybody in the house, except my lady's woman.

Sir Wilfull: Why, then belike thou dost not know thy lady, if thou seest her,—ha, friend?

Servant: Why, truly, sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she is dressed. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time.

Sir Wilfull: Well, prithee try what thou canst do; if thou canst not guess, inquire her out, dost hear, fellow? And tell her, her nephew, Sir Wilfull Witwoud, is in the house.

Servant: I shall, sir.

Sir Wilfull: Hold ye; hear me, friend; a word with you in your ear. Prithee, who are these gallants?

Servant. Really, sir, I can't tell, here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all. [*Exit Servant.*]

Sir Wilfull: Oons, this fellow knows less than a starling; I don't think a' knows his own name.

Mrs. Marwood: Mr. Witwoud, your brother is not behindhand in forgetfulness—I fancy he has forgot you too.

[illegible]

Petulant: Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

Sir Wilfull: Why, 'tis like you may, sir; if you are not satisfied with the information of my boots, sir, if you will step to the stable, you may inquire further of my horse, sir.

Petulant: Your horse, sir! your horse is an ass, sir!

Sir Wilfull: Do you speak by way of offence, sir?

Mrs. Marwood: The gentleman's merry, that's all, sir.—[*Aside.*] 'Slife, we shall have a quarrel betwixt an horse and an ass before they find one another out.—[*Aloud.*] You must not take anything amiss from your friends, sir. You are among your friends here, though it may be you don't know it.—If I am not mistaken, you are Sir Wilfull Witwoud.

[a] Compare "burn him up."

ll: Right, lady; I am Sir Wil-oud—so I write myself. No anybody, I hope—and nephew dy Wishfort of this mansion.

Marwood: Don't you know this n, sir?

ilfull: Hum! What, sure 'tis not by'r Lady, but 'tis—'sheart, I ot whether 'tis or no—yea, but the Wrekin,[19] Brother Anthony! Tony, i'faith!—what, dost thou now me? By'r Lady, nor I thee, art so be-cravated, and so be-wigged!—'Sheart, why dost not k? art thou overjoyed?

Witwoud: Odso, brother, is it you? ur servant, brother.

Sir Wilfull: Your servant!—why ours, sir. Your servant again—'sheart, nd your friend and servant to that—and a [*puff*]—and a—flap-dragon[20] for your service, sir! and a hare's foot and a hare's scut[21] for your service, sir! an you be so cold and so courtly.

Witwoud: No offence, I hope, brother.

Sir Wilfull: 'Sheart, sir, but there is, and much offence!—A pox, is this your Inns o'Court breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

Witwoud: Why, brother Wilfull of Salop,[22] you may be as short as a Shrews-bury-cake, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country, where great lubberly brothers slabber and kiss one another when they meet, like a call of sergeants[23]—'tis not the fashion here; 'tis not indeed, dear brother.

Sir Wilfull: The fashion's a fool; and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this—by'r Lady, I conjectured you were a fop since you began to change the style of your letters, and write on a scrap of paper gilt round the edges, no bigger than a *subpœna*. I might expect this when you left off "Honored Brother," and "hoping you are in good health," and so forth—to begin with a "Rat me, knight, I'm so sick of a last night's debauch—'ods heart," and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a whore and a bottle, and so conclude.—You could write news before you were out of your time, when you lived with honest Pumple Nose, the attorney of Furnival's Inn—you could entreat to be remembered then to your friends round the Wrekin. We could have gazettes, then, and Dawks's Letter,[24] and the Weekly Bill,[25] till of late days.

Petulant: 'Slife, Witwoud, were you ever an attorney's clerk? of the family of the Furnivals? Ha, ha, ha!

Witwoud: Aye, aye, but that was but for a while—not long, not long. Pshaw! I was not in my own power then; an orphan, and this fellow was my guardian. Aye, aye, I was glad to consent to that man to come to London. He had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound 'prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

Sir Wilfull: 'Sheart, and better than to be bound to a maker of fops—where, I suppose, you have served your time, and now you may set up for yourself.

Mrs. Marwood: You intend to travel, sir, as I'm informed.

Sir Wilfull: Belike I may, madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

Petulant: And the wind serve.

Sir Wilfull: Serve or not serve, I shan't ask licence of you, sir; nor the weathercock your companion. I direct my discourse to the lady, sir.—'Tis like my aunt may have told you, madam—yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts—if an' how that the peace holds, whereby that is, taxes abate.

[19] A hill in Shropshire. [20] Term of contempt (from a game). [21] Tail. [22] Shropshire. [23] Call of a sergeant-at-law to the bar.

[24] A news sheet for country circulatio
[25] Bill of Mortality for London, issu weekly.

Mrs. Marwood: I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

Sir Wilfull: I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand shill I, shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't. But I have thoughts to tarry a [illegible]

French, as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

Mrs. Marwood Here's an academy in town for that use

Sir Wilfull: There is! 'Tis like there may.

Mrs. Marwood No doubt you will return very much improved.

Witwoud: Yes, refined, like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing [*Enter Lady Wishfort and Fainall.*]

Lady Wishfort. Nephew, you are welcome

Sir Wilfull Aunt, your servant.

Fainall Sir Wilfull, your most faithful servant.

Sir Wilfull: Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

Lady Wishfort. Cousin Witwoud, your servant; Mr. Petulant, your servant, nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink anything after your journey, nephew, before you eat? Dinner's almost ready.

Sir Wilfull: I'm very well, I thank you, aunt—however, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart, I was afraid you would have been in the fashion, too, and have remembered to have forgot your relations Here's your cousin Tony; belike, I mayn't call him brother for fear of offence.

Lady Wishfort: Oh, he's a rallier, nephew—my cousin's a wit. And your great wits always rally their best friends to choose.[26] When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better [*Fainall and Mrs. Marwood talk apart.*]

Sir Wilfull: Why then, let him hold his tongue in the meantime, and rail when that day comes. [*Enter Mincing.*]

Mincing: Mem, I am come to acquaint your la'ship that dinner is impatient.

Sir Wilfull: Impatient! why, then, belike it won't stay till I pull off my boots.—Sweetheart, can you help me to [illegible] f slippers?—My man's with his warrant.

Wishfort: Fie, fie, nephew! you would not pull off your boots here!—Go down into the hall—dinner shall stay for you [*Exit Sir Wilfull.*] My nephew's a little unbred; you'll pardon him, madam.—Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?

Mrs. Marwood: I'll follow you, madam—before Sir Wilfull is ready. [*Manent Mrs. Marwood and Fainall.*]

Fainall: Why then, Foible's a bawd, an arrant, rank, match-making bawd. And I, it seems, am a husband, a rank husband; and my wife a very errant, rank wife—all in the way of the world. 'Sdeath, to be an anticipated cuckold, a cuckold in embryo! Sure, I was born with budding antlers, like a young satyr or a citizen's child. 'Sdeath! to be out-witted, to be out-jilted—out-matrimony'd!—If I had kept my speed like a stag, 'twere somewhat—but to crawl after, with my horns like a snail, and be outstripped by my wife—'tis scurvy wedlock.

Mrs Marwood: Then shake it off. You have often wished for an opportunity to part, and now you have it But first prevent their plot—the half of Millamant's fortune is too considerable to be parted with to a foe, to Mirabell.

Fainall Damn him! that had been mine had [illegible] y wife had added lustre to my horns by that increase of fortune; I could have worn 'em tipped with gold, though my forehead had been furnished like a deputy-lieutenant's hall.

[26] As they choose.

[27] Silly exposure

Mrs. Marwood: They may prove a cap of maintenance [23] to you still, if you can away [24] with your wife. And she's no worse than when you had her—I dare swear she had given up her game before she was married.

Fainall: Hum! that may be.

Mrs. Marwood: You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected, why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

Fainall: The means, the means?

Mrs. Marwood: Discover to my lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her! My lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it just upon the discovery of this imposture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds, and sacrifice niece, and fortune, and all, at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she should flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fainall: Faith, this has an appearance.

Mrs. Marwood: I'm sorry I hinted to my lady to endeavor a match between Millamant and Sir Wilfull; that may be an obstacle.

Fainall: Oh, for that matter, leave me to manage him. I'll disable him for that; he will drink like a Dane. After dinner I'll set his hand in.

Mrs. Marwood: Well, how do you stand affected towards your lady?

Fainall: Why, faith, I'm thinking of it.—Let me see—I am married already, so that's over. My wife has played the jade with me—well, that's over, too. I never loved her, or if I had, why, that would have been over, too, by this time. —Jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of jealousy: weary of her I am, and shall be—no, there's no end of that—no, no, that were too much to hope. Thus far concerning my repose; now for my reputation. As to my own, I married not for it, so that's out of the question; and as to my part in my wife's—why, she had parted with hers before; so bringing none to me, she can take none from me. 'Tis against all rule of play that I should lose to one who has not wherewithal to stake.

Mrs. Marwood: Besides, you forgot marriage is honorable.

Fainall: Hum, faith, and that's well thought on. Marriage is honorable, as you say; and if so, wherefore should cuckoldom be a discredit, being derived from so honorable a root?

Mrs. Marwood: Nay, I know not; if the root be honorable, why not the branches?

Fainall: So, so; why, this point's clear.—Well, how do we proceed?

Mrs. Marwood: I will contrive a letter which shall be delivered to my lady at the time when that rascal who is to act Sir Rowland is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand—for the less I appear to know of the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I would not have Foible provoked if I could help it—because you know she knows some passages—nay, I expect all will come out. But let the mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I am discovered.

Fainall: If the worst come to the worst, I'll turn my wife to grass. I have already a deed of settlement of the best part of her estate, which I wheedled out of her, and that you shall partake at least.

Mrs. Marwood: I hope you are convinced that I hate Mirabell. Now you'll be no more jealous?

Fainall: Jealous! No, by this kiss. Let husbands be jealous, but let the lover still believe; or, if he doubt, let it be only to endear his pleasure, and prepare the joy that follows when he proves his mistress true. But let husbands' doubts convert to endless jealousy; or, if they have belief, let it corrupt to superstition and blind credulity. I am single,

[23] Heraldic term. The two points of the cap suggest cuckold's horns. Note the pun on *maintenance*. [24] Endure.

and will herd no more with 'em. True, I wear the badge, but I'll disown the order. And since I take my leave of 'em, I care not if I leave 'em a common motto to their common crest:

All husbands must or pain or shame endure;
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure.
[*Exeunt.*]

QUESTIONS ON ACT III

1. Meredith has characterized the language of Lady Wishfort as "boudoir Billingsgate." What does he mean? Illustrate from the first part of the act.

2. Compare the early part of the act, in which Marwood overhears the conversation of the other characters, with the "screen scene" in *The School for Scandal*. The function of the scene, to introduce a complication in the plot, is obvious. But is the scene discordant in tone? Is it too much in the nature of farce for such a comedy as this? Does it have any of the symbolic significance of Sheridan's screen scene?

3. What is the function of the song in the middle of the act? Does it reflect Millamant's real feelings? Does it reflect the fashionable feelings which she knows she is supposed to have? In what way, if any, does it stand as a commentary on the situation?

4. Sir Wilfull, it should be noted, has a double value. On one level he serves as a conventional "hick comedy" figure—that is, for the amusement that can be derived from placing an unpolished countryman in a polished urban society. But Sir Wilfull, it soon becomes apparent, is a great deal more than a simpleton: he has a certain wit and penetration of his own, and he is far from lacking courage in his own convictions. He has, therefore, an important function in giving us another perspective upon the [illegible] world which otherwise we have so far had to take at its own [illegible] To what extent are we meant to sympathize with this new [illegible] With whom is Sir Wilfull most sharply contrasted? Do the [illegible] Sir Wilfull give us any new light on Lady Wishfort?

As you read the rest of the play, try to determine [illegible] is meant to cut a better figure in contrast with some [illegible] contrast with others.

5. What in the first part of Act III helps quickly to [illegible] with Act II?

6. Lady Wishfort characterizes Mirabell as having "[illegible] that would corrupt integrity itself." Does the speech help [illegible] terize her? Are we given elsewhere in the play [illegible] weigh against her characterization of him?

7. The books which Lady Wishfort recommends [illegible] by Puritans: two express great hostility to the [illegible] purpose in mentioning them here?

8. [illegible]
expr [illegible]
any

9. What matters mentioned in the last several pages of the act are very important for our comprehension of the various schemes which come to fruition in the rest of the play?

ACT IV

[Scene continues.]

[*Enter Lady Wishfort and Foible.*]

Lady Wishfort: Is Sir Rowland coming, sayest thou, Foible? And are things in order?

Foible: Yes, madam, I have put wax lights in the sconces, and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postilion to fill up the equipage.

Lady Wishfort: Have you pulvilled[1] the coachman and postilion, that they may not stink of the stable when Sir Rowland comes by?

Foible: Yes, madam.

Lady Wishfort: And are the dancers and the music ready, that he may be entertained in all points with correspondence to his passion?

Foible: All is ready, madam.

Lady Wishfort: And—well—how do I look, Foible?

Foible: Most killing well, madam.

Lady Wishfort: Well, and how shall I receive him? in what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? There is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit?—no, I won't sit—I'll walk—aye, I'll walk from the door upon his entrance, and then turn full upon him—no, that will be too sudden. I'll lie,—aye, I'll lie down—I'll receive him in my little dressing-room; there's a couch—yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch.—I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way—yes—and then as soon as he appears, start, aye, start and be surprised, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder—yes.—Oh, nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch, in some confusion; it shows the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes, and recomposing airs beyond comparison. Hark! there's a coach.

Foible: 'Tis he, madam.

Lady Wishfort: Oh, dear, has my nephew made his addresses to Millamant? I ordered him.

Foible: Sir Wilfull is set in drinking, madam, in the parlor.

Lady Wishfort: Odds my life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go.—When they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with Sir Rowland. [*Exit Lady Wishfort.*]

[*Enter Mrs. Millamant and Mrs. Fainall.*]

Foible: Madam, I stayed here to tell your ladyship that Mr. Mirabell has waited this half-hour for an opportunity to talk with you—though my lady's orders were to leave you and Sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr. Mirabell that you are at leisure?

Mrs. Millamant: No. What would the dear man have? I am thoughtful, and would amuse myself—bid him come another time. [*Repeating, and walking about.*]

There never yet was woman made
Nor shall, but to be cursed.[2]

That's hard!

Mrs. Fainall: You are very fond of Sir John Suckling to-day, Millamant, and the poets.

Mrs. Millamant: He? Aye, and filthy verses—so I am.

Foible: Sir Wilfull is coming, madam. Shall I send Mr. Mirabell away?

Mrs. Millamant: Aye, if you please, Foible, send him away, or send him hither—just as you will, dear Foible. I

[1] Scented.

[2] From a poem by Suckling.

think I'll see him—shall I? Aye, let the wretch come. [*Exit Foible.*] [*Repeating.*]

Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train.[3]

Dear Fainall, entertain Sir Wilfull—thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool. Thou art married and hast patience—I [illegible]

[illegible] affair, but I have business of my own. [*Enter Sir Wilfull.*] O Sir Wilfull, you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation; pursue your point now or never.

Sir Wilfull: Yes; my aunt will have it so—I would gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first before I am acquainted.—[*This while Millamant walks about repeating to herself.*]—But I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—that is, upon further acquaintance.—So for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave. If so be you'll be so kind to make my excuse, I'll return to my company—

Mrs. Fainall: Oh, fie, Sir Wilfull! [illegible]

[illegible] that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient till further acquaintance, that's all—your servant.

Mrs. Fainall: Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favorable an opportunity if I can help it. I'll leave you together, and lock the door. [*Exit.*]

Sir Wilfull: Nay, nay, cousin—I have forgot my gloves!—What d'ye do?—'Sheart, a' has locked the door indeed, I think. Nay, Cousin Fainall, open the door! Pshaw, what a vixen trick is this?—Nay, now a' has seen me too—Cousin, I made bold to pass through as it were—I think this door's enchanted!

Mrs. Millamant. [*Repeating.*]

I prithee spare me, gentle boy,
Press me no more for that slight toy.

Sir Wilfull: Anan?[4] Cousin, your servant.

Mrs. Millamant:

—That foolish trifle of a heart—

Sir Wilfull!

Sir Wilfull: Yes—your servant. No offence, I hope, cousin.

Mrs. Millamant: [*Repeating.*]

I swear it will do its part,
Though thou dost thine, employ'st thy power and art.

Natural, easy Suckling!

Sir Wilfull: Anan? Suckling. No such suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank heaven, I'm no minor.

Mrs. Millamant: Ah, rustic, ruder than Gothic!

Sir Wilfull: Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin; in the meanwhile I must answer in plain English.

Mrs. Millamant: Have you any business with me, Sir Wilfull?

Sir Wilfull: Not at present, cousin.—Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know if that how you were disposed to [illegible]

Mrs. Millamant: A walk! what then?

Sir Wilfull: Nay, nothing—only for the walk's sake, that's all.

Mrs. Millamant: I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion. I loathe the country, and everything that relates to it.

Sir Wilfull. Indeed! ha! Look ye, look ye—you do? Nay, 'tis like you may—here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like; that must be confessed, indeed.

Mrs. Millamant: *Ah, l'étourdi!* I hate the town too.

Sir Wilfull: Dear heart, that's much—ha! that you should hate 'em both! Ha! 'tis like you may, there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away

[3] From Waller's "The Story of Phœbus and Daphne Applied."

[4] Beg pardon.

with the country—'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

Mrs. Millamant: Ha, ha, ha! yes, 'tis like I may.—You have nothing further to say to me?

Sir Wilfull: Not at present, cousin.—'Tis like when I have an opportunity to be more private, I may break my mind in some measure—I conjecture you partly guess—however, that's as time shall try—but spare to speak and spare to speed, as they say.

Mrs. Millamant: If it is of no great importance, Sir Wilfull, you will oblige me to leave me; I have just now a little business—

Sir Wilfull: Enough, enough, cousin: yes, yes, all a case.—When you're disposed, when you're disposed. Now's as well as another time, and another time as well as now. All's one for that—Yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold, as they say. Cousin, your servant.—I think this door's locked.

Mrs. Millamant: You may go this way, sir.

Sir Wilfull: Your servant; then with your leave I'll return to my company. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Millamant: Aye, aye; ha, ha, ha!

Like Phœbus sung the no less amorous boy.[5]

[*Enter Mirabell.*]

Mirabell: "Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy." Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious, or is this pretty artifice contrived to signify that here the chase must end, and my pursuits be crowned? For you can fly no further.

Mrs. Millamant: Vanity! No—I'll fly, and be followed to the last moment. Though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last—nay, and afterwards.

Mirabell: What, after the last?

Mrs. Millamant: Oh, I should think I was poor and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduced to an inglorious ease and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation.

Mirabell: But do not you know that when favors are conferred upon instant[6] and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses the grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure?

Mrs. Millamant: It may be in things of common application; but never, sure, in love. Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent of the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical[7] an air. Ah! I'll never marry unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

Mirabell: Would you have 'em both before marriage? or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other till after grace?

Mrs. Millamant: Ah! don't be impertinent.—My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? my faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay-h adieu—my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *douceurs*, ye *sommeils du matin, adieu.*—I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible.—Positively, Mirabell, I'll lie abed in a morning as long as I please.

Mirabell: Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

Mrs. Millamant: Ah? Idle creature, get up when you will—and d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively, I won't be called names.

Mirabell: Names!

Mrs. Millamant: Aye, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in

[5] From Waller. See note 3.

[6] Insistent. [7] Dogmatic.

which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that. Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis; nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never to be seen there together again, as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred. Let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

Mirabell: Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

Mrs. Millamant: Trifles—as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please, and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste, to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance: or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations.—Come to dinner when I please; dine in my dressingroom when I'm out of *humor, without giving a reason.* To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must [illegible] before you come in These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

Mirabell: Your bill of fare is some- [illegible] wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

Mrs. Millamant: You have free leave. Propose your utmost; speak and spare not.

Mirabell: I thank you.—*Imprimis* then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidante or intimate of your own sex—no she-friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy-duck to wheedle you—a fop scrambling to the play in a mask—then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out—and rail at me for missing the play and disappointing the frolic which you had, to pick me up and prove my constancy.

Mrs. Millamant: Detestable *imprimis!* I go to the play in a mask!

Mirabell: Item, I article, that you continue to like your own face, as long as I shall; and while it passes current with me, that you endeavor not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled-skins and I know not what—hogs' bones, hares' gall, pig-water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewoman in what-d'ye-call-it Court. *Item*, I shut my doors against all bawds with baskets, and pennyworths of muslin, china, fans, atlases,[1] etc.—*Item*, when you shall be breeding—

Mrs. Millamant: Ah! name it not.

Mirabell: Which may be presumed, with a blessing on our endeavors—

Mrs. Millamant: Odious endeavors!

Mirabell: I denounce against all strait lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf, and instead of a man-child make me father to a crooked billet Lastly, to the dominion of the tea-table I submit—but with proviso, that you exceed not in your province, but restrain yourself to [illegible] and simple tea-table drinks, as [illegible]ocolate, and coffee; as likewise to [illegible]

[1] A variety of satin

and so forth—but that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows: for prevention of which I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table, as orange-brandy, all aniseed, cinnamon, citron, and Barbadoes waters, together with ratafia, and the most noble spirit of clary, but for cowslip wine, poppy water, and all dormitives, those I allow.—These provisos admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

Mrs. Millamant: O horrid provisos! filthy strong-waters! I toast fellows! odious men! I hate your odious provisos.

Mirabell: Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed. [*Enter Mrs. Fainall.*]

Mrs. Millamant: Fainall, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Mrs. Fainall: Aye, aye, take him, take him; what should you do?

Mrs. Millamant: Well then—I'll take my death, I'm in a horrid fright.—Fainall, I shall never say it—well—I think—I'll endure you.

Mrs. Fainall: Fie! fie! Have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms; for I am sure you have a mind to him.

Mrs. Millamant: Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too. Well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you—I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked—here, kiss my hand though.—So, hold your tongue now; don't say a word.

Mrs. Fainall: Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience; you have neither time to talk nor stay. My mother is coming, and in my conscience if she should see you, would fall into fits, and maybe not recover time enough to return to Sir Rowland, who, as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed. Therefore spare your ecstasies for another occasion, and slip down the backstairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

Mrs. Millamant: Aye, go, go. In the meantime I suppose you have said something to please me.

Mirabell: I am all obedience. [*Exit Mirabell.*]

Mrs. Fainall: Yonder, Sir Wilfull's drunk, and so noisy that my mother has been forced to leave Sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking. What they may have done by this time I know not, but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

Mrs. Millamant: Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing, for I find I love him violently.

Mrs. Fainall: So it seems, when you mind not what's said to you.—If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir Wilfull.

Mrs. Millamant: How can you name that superannuated lubber?—Foh! [*Enter Witwoud from drinking.*]

Mrs. Fainall: So! Is the fray made up, that you have left 'em?

Witwoud: Left 'em? I could stay no longer. I have laughed like ten christ'nings—I am tipsy with laughing. If I had stayed any longer I should have burst—I must have been let out and pieced in the sides like an unfixed camlet.[9]—Yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *noli prosequi*,[10] and stopped their proceedings.

Mrs. Millamant: What was the dispute?

Witwoud: That's the jest; there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage, and so fell a sputtering at one another like two roasting apples. [*Enter Petulant, drunk.*] Now, Petulant, all's over, all's well. Gad, my head begins to whim it about—Why dost thou not speak? Thou art both as drunk and mute as a fish.

Petulant: Look you, Mrs. Millamant—if you can love me, dear nymph, say

[9] Unstiffened material. [10] Be unwilling to prosecute.

it—and that's the conclusion. Pass on, or pass off—that's all.

Witwoud: Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto*,[11] my dear Lacedemonian.[12] Sirrah Petulant, thou art an epitomizer of words.

Petulant: Witwoud—you are an annihilator of sense.

Witwoud: Thou art a retailer of phrases, and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions—thou art in truth (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of shorthand.

Petulant: Thou art (without a figure) just one-half of an ass, and Baldwin[13] yonder, thy half-brother, is the rest.—A Gemini[14] of asses split would make just four of you

Witwoud. Thou dost bite, my dear mustard seed, kiss me for that.

Petulant: Stand off!—I'll kiss no more males—I have kissed your twin yonder in a humor of reconciliation, till he [*hiccup*] rises upon my stomach like a radish

Mrs. Millamant: Eh! filthy creature!—What was the quarrel?

Petulant: There was no quarrel—there might have been a quarrel

Witwoud: If there had been words enow between 'em to have expressed provocation, they had gone together by ears like a pair of castanets

Petulant You were the quarrel.

Mrs. Millamant: Me!

Petulant If I have a humor to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premises.—If you are not handsome, what then, if I have a humor to prove it? If I shall have my reward, say so, if not, fight for your face the next time yourself. I'll go sleep

Witwoud: Do; wrap thyself up like a wood-louse, and dream revenge—and [illegible]

[illegible]

key a spider!—Go, flea dogs, and read romances!—I'll go to bed to my maid. [*Exit Petulant.*]

Mrs. Fainall: He's horridly drunk. How came you all in this pickle?

Witwoud: A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight—your husband's advice, but he sneaked off. [*Enter Lady Wishfort and then Sir Wilfull, drunk.*]

Lady Wishfort: Out upon't, out upon't! At years of discretion, and comport yourself at this rantipole rate!

Sir Wilfull: No offence, aunt.

Lady Wishfort: Offence! as I'm a person, I'm ashamed of you. Fob! how you stink of wine! D'ye think my niece will ever endure such a borachio! you're an absolute borachio.[15]

Sir Wilfull: Borachio?

Lady Wishfort: At a time when you should commence an amour and put your best foot foremost—

Sir Wilfull 'Sheart, an you grudge me your liquor, make a bill—give me more drink, and take my purse—[*Sings.*]

Prithee fill me the glass,
 Till it laugh in my face,
With ale that is potent and mellow;
 He that whines for a lass,
 Is an *ignorant* ass,
For a bumper has not its fellow.

But if you would have me marry my cousin—say the word, and I'll do't. Wilfull will do't, that's the word. Wilfull will do't; that's my crest—My motto I have forgot

Lady Wishfort [*To Mrs. Millamant.*] My nephew's a little overtaken, cousin, but 'tis with drinking your health.—O' my word, you are obliged to him.

Sir Wilfull *In vino veritas*, aunt.—If I drunk your health to-day, cousin—I am a Borachio. But if you have a mind to [illegible]

Tony's an honest fellow; but he spits

[11] Very small book. [12] Noted for saying little. [13] The ass in *Reynard the Fox* [14] Twins.

[15] Drunkard

after a bumper, and that's a fault.—[*Sings.*]

We'll drink and we'll never ha' done, boys,
Put the glass then around with the sun, boys,
Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he's drunk every night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he's able next morning to light us.

The sun's a good pimple,[16] an honest soaker; he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your Antipodes.—Your Antipodes are a good, rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows: if I had a bumper, I'd stand upon my head and drink a health to 'em.—A match or no match, cousin with the hard name—Aunt, Wilfull will do't. If she has her maidenhead, let her look to't; if she has not, let her keep her own counsel in the meantime, and cry out at the nine months' end.

Mrs. Millamant: Your pardon, madam, I can stay no longer—Sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Eh! how he smells! I shall be overcome, if I stay. Come, cousin. [*Exeunt Mrs. Millamant and Mrs. Fainall.*]

Lady Wishfort: Smells! He would poison a tallow-chandler and his family! Beastly creature, I know not what to do with him!—Travel, quotha! Aye, travel, travel—get thee gone, get thee gone; get thee but far enough, to the Saracens, or the Tartars, or the Turks!—for thou art not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly pagan!

Sir Wilfull: Turks? No; no Turks, aunt. Your Turks are infidels, and believe not in the grape. Your Mahometan, your Mussulman, is a dry stinkard—no offence, aunt. My map says that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian. I cannot find by the map that your Mufti is orthodox—whereby it is a plain case that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and [*hiccup*]—Greek for claret.—[*Sings.*]

To drink is a Christian diversion,
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian:
Let Mahometan fools
Live by heathenish rules,
And be damned over tea-cups and coffee.
But let British lads sing,
Crown a health to the king,
And a fig for your sultan and sophy!

Ah, Tony! [*Enter Foible, and whispers Lady Wishfort.*]

Lady Wishfort: [*Aside to Foible.*] Sir Rowland impatient? Good lack! what shall I do with this beastly tumbril?—[*Aloud.*] Go lie down and sleep, you sot!—or, as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinadoed with broomsticks.—Call up the wenches. [*Exit Foible.*]

Sir Wilful: Ahey! wenches; where are the wenches?

Lady Wishfort: Dear Cousin Witwoud, get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment that invades me with some precipitation—you will oblige me to all futurity.

Witwoud: Come, knight.—Pox on him, I don't know what to say to him.—Will you go to a cock-match?

Sir Wilfull: With a wench, Tony? Is she a shakebag, sirrah? Let me bite your cheek for that.

Witwoud: Horrible! he has a breath like a bagpipe—Aye, aye; come, will you march, my Salopian?

Sir Wilfull: Lead on, little Tony—I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tantony. Sirrah, thou shalt be my Tantony, and I'll be thy pig.[17] [*Sings.*]

And a fig for your sultan and sophy.

[*Exeunt Sir Wilfull and Witwoud.*]

Lady Wishfort: This will never do. It will never make a match—at least before he has been abroad. [*Enter Waitwell, disguised as Sir Rowland.*] Dear Sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness!—I

[16] Boon companion.

[17] St. Antony and the pig are associated in legend.

have more pardons to ask than the pope distributes in the year of jubilee. But I hope, where there is likely to be so near an alliance, we may unbend the severity of decorums and dispense with a little ceremony.

Waitwell: My impatience, madam, is the effect of my transport; and till I [illegible] expectation.

Lady Wishfort: You have excess of gallantry, Sir Rowland, and press things to a conclusion with a most prevailing vehemence.—But a day or two for decency of marriage—

Waitwell: For decency of funeral, madam! The delay will break my heart—or, if that should fail, I shall be poisoned. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs, and poison me; and I would willingly starve him before I die—I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction.—That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be revenged on that unnatural viper!

[illegible] accomplishment of your revenge—not that I respect myself, though he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

Waitwell. Perfidious to you!

Lady Wishfort: O Sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has shed, the oaths that he has sworn, the palpitations [illegible] has felt, the trances and the [illegible] the ardors and the ecstasies, the [illegible] and the risings, the heart-[illegible] the handgrippings, the [illegible] pathetic regards of his [illegible] Oh, no memory can [illegible]

Waitwell: What, my [illegible] my rival?—a' dies!

Lady Wishfort: No, [illegible] once, Sir Rowland, [illegible] inch by inch.

Waitwell: I'll [illegible]

shall be barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms.—He shall starve upward and upward, till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink like a candle's end upon a save-all.[13]

Lady Wishfort: Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way—you are no [illegible] sinister appetite, or indigence of widowhood; nor impute [illegible] cency to any lethargy of [illegible] hope you do not think [illegible] iteration of nuptials—

Waitwell: Far be it from [illegible]

Lady Wishfort: [illegible] must recede—[illegible] a prostitution of [illegible] vehemence of [illegible] the life of a [illegible] tance—

Waitwell: I [illegible]

Lady Wishfort: [illegible] condescension. [illegible]

have I undergone! Spouse, hast thou any cordial? I want spirits.

Foible: What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady!

Waitwell: Oh, she is the antidote to desire! Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't—I shall have no appetite to iteration of nuptials this eight-and-forty hours.—By this hand I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days than act Sir Rowland till this time to-morrow! [*Enter Lady Wishfort, with a letter.*]

Lady Wishfort: Call in the dancers.—Sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the entertainment. [*A dance.*] Now, with your permission, Sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter.—I would open it in your presence, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy, I would burn it. Speak, if it does—but you may see by the superscription it is like a woman's hand.

Foible: [*Aside to Waitwell.*] By heaven! Mrs. Marwood's, I know it.—My heart aches—get it from her.

Waitwell: A woman's hand? No, madam, that's no woman's hand; I see that already. That's somebody whose throat must be cut.

Lady Wishfort: Nay, Sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make a return by a frank communication.—You shall see it—we'll open it together—look you here.—[*Reads.*]—"Madam, though unknown to you"—Look you there, 'tis from nobody that I know—"I have that honor for your character, that I think myself obliged to let you know you are abused. He who pretends to be Sir Rowland, is a cheat and a rascal."—Oh, heavens! what's this?

Foible. [*Aside.*] Unfortunate, all's ruined!

Waitwell: How, how! Let me see, let me see!—[*Reads.*] "A rascal, and disguised and suborned for that imposture,"—O villainy! O villainy!—"by the contrivance of—"

Lady Wishfort: I shall faint!—I shall die, I shall die!—Oh!

Foible. [*Aside to Waitwell.*] Say 'tis your nephew's hand—quickly, his plot,—swear it, swear it!

Waitwell: Here's a villain! Madam, don't you perceive it? Don't you see it?

Lady Wishfort: Too well, too well! I have seen too much.

Waitwell: I told you at first I knew the hand.—A woman's hand! The rascal writes a sort of a large hand—your Roman hand.—I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him!

Foible: O treachery!—But are you sure, Sir Rowland, it is his writing?

Waitwell: Sure? Am I here? Do I live? Do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him in the same character.

Lady Wishfort: How!

Foible: Oh, what luck it is, Sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture! This was the business that brought Mr. Mirabell disguised to Madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving when he stole by me and would have hid his face.

Lady Wishfort: How, how!—I heard the villain was in the house, indeed; and now I remember, my niece went away abruptly when Sir Wilfull was to have made his addresses.

Foible: Then, then, madam, Mr. Mirabell waited for her in her chamber; but I would not tell your ladyship to discompose you when you were to receive Sir Rowland.

Waitwell: Enough; his date is short.

Foible: No, good Sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

Waitwell: Law! I care not for law. I can but die and 'tis in a good cause.—My lady shall be satisfied of my truth and innocence, though it cost me my life.

Lady Wishfort: No, dear Sir Rowland, don't fight. If you should be killed, I must never show my face; or hanged—oh, consider my reputation, Sir Rowland!—No, you shan't fight.—I'll go in

and examine my niece; I'll make her confess. I conjure you, Sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

Waitwell: I am charmed, madam; I obey. But some proof you must let me give you; I'll go for a black box which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

Lady Wishfort: Aye, dear Sir Rowland, that will be some comfort. Bring the black box.

Waitwell: And may I presume to bring a contract to be signed this night? May I hope so far?

Lady Wishfort: Bring what you will, but come alive, pray, come alive! Oh, this is a happy discovery!

Waitwell: Dead or alive I'll come—and married we will be in spite of treachery; aye, and get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in my abandoned nephew. Come, my buxom widow:

Ere long you shall substantial proofs receive,
That I'm an errant knight—

Foible: [*Aside.*] Or arrant knave. [*Exeunt.*]

QUESTIONS ON ACT IV

1. Compare Lady Wishfort's conversation with Foible as she prepares to meet her lover (p. 422a, 7 ff.) and Millamant's later conversation with Mirabell (p. 424a, 35 ff.). Would it be fair to say that Lady Wishfort is very artfully preparing to appear artless and that Millamant reverses the process—that she is trying to appear more artful and designing than she really is?

2. The "bargaining scene" between Millamant and Mirabell is obviously balanced by the "love" scene between Lady Wishfort and the supposed Sir Rowland. What points of resemblance are there? What is the basic contrast? In what different ways, for example, do Millamant and Lady Wishfort dismiss any suggestion that their desires are in the least way "carnal"? What is the difference between the mind and personality shown, on the one hand, by Mirabell and Millamant, and, on the other, by Lady Wishfort?

3. Millamant stipulates that Mirabell must refrain after their marriage from all "nauseous cant." How does the scene between Lady Wishfort and the supposed Sir Rowland give point to her proviso?

4. Both the bargaining scene and the declaration of "Sir Rowland" to Lady Wishfort may be taken as parodies on the conventional proposal scene. In what way is each a parody?

5. How does the interview of the matter-of-fact, unsentimental Sir Wilfull with Millamant prepare for the bargaining scene which follows it?

6. An ironic complication in this act is the fact that in one respect the plans of Marwood and her lover Fainall are at cross purposes. Trace out the difficulty created for them by this fact.

7. As questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 suggest, the act is almost entirely concerned with "love" scenes. On the face of it the drunken scenes involving Witwood, Petulant, and Sir Wilfull may seem to violate the pattern; yet closer inspection reveals that they also fit into it. In view of this fact, could we venture any conclusion as to the sort of statement about love which is being made or implied by the act as a whole?

ACT V

[Scene continues.]

[*Lady Wishfort and Foible.*]

Lady Wishfort: Out of my house! Out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent, that I have fostered! thou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing!—Begone, begone, begone, go! go!—That I took from washing of old gauze and weaving of dead hair, with a bleak blue nose over a chafing-dish of starved embers, and dining behind a traverse rag,[1] in a shop no bigger than a bird-cage!—Go, go! Starve again! Do, do!

Foible: Dear madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

Lady Wishfort: Away! out, out!—Go, set up for yourself again!—Do, drive a trade, do, with your three-pennyworth of small ware, flaunting upon a pack-thread under a brandy-seller's bulk, or against a dead wall by a ballad-monger! Go, hang out an old Frisoneer gorget,[2] with a yard of yellow colbertine[3] again, do! An old gnawed mask, two rows of pins, and a child's fiddle; a glass necklace with the beads broken, and a quilted night-cap with one ear! Go, go, drive a trade!—These were your commodities, your treacherous trull! this was the merchandise you dealt in when I took you into my house, placed you next myself, and made you governante of my whole family! You have forgot this, have you, now you have feathered your nest?

Foible: No, no, dear madam. Do but hear me; have but a moment's patience. I'll confess all. Mr. Mirabell seduced me. I am not the first that he has wheedled with his dissembling tongue; your ladyship's own wisdom has been deluded by him—then how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? O madam, if you knew but what he promised me, and how he assured me your ladyship should come to no damage!—Or else the wealth of the Indies should not have bribed me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a lady as you have been to me.

Lady Wishfort: No damage! What, to betray me, and marry me to a cast servingman! to make me a receptacle, an hospital for a decayed pimp! No damage! O thou frontless impudence, more than a big-bellied actress!

Foible: Pray, do but hear me, madam! He could not marry your ladyship, madam.—No, indeed; his marriage was to have been void in law, for he was married to me first, to secure your ladyship. He could not have bedded your ladyship; for if he had consummated with your ladyship, he must have run the risk of the law, and been put upon his clergy.[4]—Yes, indeed, I inquired of the law in that case before I would meddle or make.

Lady Wishfort: What, then I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it seems!—while you were catering for Mirabell, I have been broker for you! What, have you made a passive bawd of me?—This exceeds all precedent! I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews. I'll couple you! Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander. I'll Duke's-place[5] you, as I'm a person! Your turtle is in custody already: you shall coo in the same cage if there be a constable or warrant in the parish. [*Exit Lady Wishfort.*]

Foible: Oh, that ever I was born! Oh, that I was ever married!—A bride!—aye, I shall be a Bridewell-bride.[6]—Oh! [*Enter Mrs. Fainall.*]

Mrs. Fainall: Poor Foible, what's the matter?

Foible: O madam, my lady's gone for a constable! I shall be had to a justice

[1] A ragged curtain. [2] Worn over the bosom. [3] Cheap lace.

[4] Forced to plead benefit of clergy (tested by the ability to read) in order to escape hanging. [5] See Act I, note 6. [6] House of correction.

and put to Bridewell to beat hemp. Poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

Mrs. Fainall: Have a good heart, Foible; Mirabell's gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

Foible: Yes, yes; I know it, madam. She was in my lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my lady, and that missing effect, Mr. Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell when he *pretended to go for the papers, and in* the meantime Mrs. Marwood declared all to my lady.

Mrs. Fainall: Was there no mention made of me in the letter? My mother does not suspect my being in the con*federacy? I fancy Marwood has not* told her, though she has told my husband.

Foible: Yes, madam, but my lady did not see that part; we stifled the letter before she read so far—Has that mischievous devil told Mr. Fainall of your ladyship, then?

Mrs. Fainall. Aye, all's out, my affair with Mirabell—everything discovered. This is the last day of our living together, that's my comfort.

Foible: Indeed, madam; and so 'tis a comfort if you knew all—he has been even with your ladyship, which I could have told you long enough since, but I [illegible]

Mrs. Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

Mrs. Fainall: Sayest thou so, Foible? Canst thou prove this?

Foible: I can take my oath of it, madam; so can Mrs. Mincing. We have had many a fair word from Madam Marwood, to conceal something that passed in our chamber one evening when you were at Hyde Park, and we were thought to have gone a-walking, but we went up unawares—though we were sworn to secrecy, too; Madam Marwood took a book and swore us upon it, but it was but a book of poems. So long as it was not a Bible oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

Mrs. Fainall: This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish.—Now, Mincing! [*Enter Mincing.*]

Mincing: My lady would speak with Mrs. Foible, mem. Mr. Mirabell is with her; he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs. Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my lady's closet till my old *lady's anger is abated. Oh, my old lady* is in a perilous passion at something Mr. Fainall has said; he swears, and my old lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, mem, how that he'll have my lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

Mrs. Fainall: Does your lady or Mirabell know that?

Mincing: Yes, mem; they have sent me to see if Sir Wilfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My lady is resolved to have him, I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pounds.—Oh, come, Mrs. Foible, I hear my old lady.

Mrs. Fainall: Foible, you must tell Mincing that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

Foible: Yes, yes, madam.

Mincing: Oh, yes! mem, I'll vouch anything for your ladyship's service, be what it will. [*Exeunt Mincing and Foible.*] [*Enter Lady Wishfort and Mrs. Marwood.*]

Lady Wishfort: Oh, my dear friend, how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness! To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell, to you I owe the detection of the impostor Sir Rowland. —And now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honor of my house and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams.

Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves and be shepherdesses.

Mrs. Marwood: Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, madam. We shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concerned in the treaty.

Lady Wishfort: Oh, daughter, daughter! is it possible thou shouldst be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and, as I may say, another me, and yet transgress the most minute particle of severe virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mould of virtue? I have not only been a mould but a pattern for you and a model for you, after you were brought into the world.

Mrs. Fainall: I don't understand your ladyship.

Lady Wishfort: Not understand? Why, have you not been naught? [7] have you not been sophisticated? [8] Not understand! here I am ruined to compound for your caprices and your cuckoldoms. I must pawn my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough—

Mrs. Fainall: I am wronged and abused, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation—as false as hell, as false as your friend there, aye, or your friend's friend, my false husband!

Mrs. Marwood: My friend, Mrs. Fainall! Your husband my friend? What do you mean?

Mrs. Fainall: I know what I mean, madam, and so do you; and so shall the world at a time convenient.

Mrs. Marwood: I am sorry to see you so passionate, madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal to serve your ladyship and family should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, madam, if I meddle no more with an affair in which I am not personally concerned.

Lady Wishfort: O dear friend, I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns!—[*To Mrs. Fainall.*] You ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature; she deserves more from you than all your life can accomplish.—[*To Mrs. Marwood.*] Oh, don't leave me destitute in this perplexity! No, stick to me, my good genius.

Mrs. Fainall: I tell you, madam, you are abused.—Stick to you! aye, like a leech, to suck your best blood—she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter, in composition for me. I defy 'em all. Let 'em prove their aspersions; I know my own innocence, and dare stand a trial. [*Exit Mrs. Fainall.*]

Lady Wishfort: Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wronged after all—ha! I don't know what to think—and I promise you her education has been unexceptionable—I may say it; for I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impress upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to the very sight of men. Aye, friend, she would ha' shrieked if she had but seen a man, till she was in her teens. As I am a person, 'tis true—she was never suffered to play with a male child, though but in coats; nay, her very babies [9] were of the feminine gender. Oh, she never looked a man in the face but her own father, or the chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her for a woman, by the help of his long garments and his sleek face, till she was going in her fifteen.

Mrs. Marwood: 'Twas much she should be deceived so long.

Lady Wishfort: I warrant you, or she would never have borne to have been catechized by him; and have heard his long lectures against singing and dancing, and such debaucheries; and going to filthy plays, and profane music-meetings, where the lewd trebles squeak nothing but bawdy, and the basses roar

[7] Naughty. [8] "Adulterated."

[9] Dolls.

blasphemy. Oh, she would have swooned at the sight or name of an obscene play-book!—and can I think, after all this, *that my daughter* can be naught? What, a whore? and thought it excommunication to set her foot within the door of a playhouse! O dear friend, I can't believe it. No, no! As she says, let him prove it —*let him prove it.*

Mrs. Marwood. Prove it, madam? What, and have your name prostituted in a public court—yours and your daughter's reputation worried at the [illegible]

[illegible] fumbling lecher in a quoif[33] like a man-midwife, to bring your daughter's infamy to light; to be a theme for legal punsters and quibblers by the statute; and become a jest against a rule of court, where there is no precedent for a jest in any record—not even in Domesday Book; to discompose the gravity of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in more naughty law Latin, while the good judge, tickled with the proceeding, simpers under a grey beard, and fidgets off and on his cushion as if he had swallowed cantharides, or sat upon cow-itch.—

Lady Wishfort. Oh, 'tis very hard!

Mrs. Marwood. And then to have my young revellers of the Temple take notes, like 'prentices at a conventicle, and after, talk it all over again in commons, or before drawers in an eating-house.

Lady Wishfort. Worse and worse!

Mrs. Marwood. Nay, this is nothing, if it would end here, 'twere well. But it must, after this, be consigned by the shorthand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferred to the hands, nay into the throats and lungs of hawkers, with voices more licentious than the loud flounder-man's, or the woman that cries grey peas. And this you must hear till you are stunned—nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

Lady Wishfort: Oh, 'tis insupportable! No, no, dear friend, make it up, make it up; aye, aye, I'll compound. I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all—anything, everything for composition.

Mrs. Marwood: Nay, madam, I advise nothing; I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniences which perhaps you have overseen. Here comes [illegible]

[illegible] gratulate than condole with you.

Lady Wishfort. Aye, aye, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood; no, no, I do not doubt it. [*Enter Fainall.*]

Fainall. Well, madam, I have suffered myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady, your friend, and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life, on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

Lady Wishfort. Never to marry!

Fainall. No more Sir Rowlands, the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

Mrs. Marwood. That condition, I dare answer, my lady will consent to without difficulty, she has already but too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Besides, madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

Lady Wishfort. Aye, that's true, but in case of necessity, as of health, or some such emergency—

Fainall. Oh, if you are prescribed marriage, you shall be considered, I only will reserve to myself the power to choose for you. If your physic be wholesome, it matters not who is your apothecary. Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune not made over already, and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

Lady Wishfort. This is most [illegible]

[32] The call made to open a session of court.

[33] Lawyer's cap.

humanly savage, exceeding the barbarity of a Muscovite husband.

Fainall: I learned it from his Czarish majesty's[12] retinue, in a winter evening's conference over brandy and pepper, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy as they are at present practised in the northern hemisphere. But this must be agreed unto, and that positively. Lastly, I will be endowed, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pounds which is the moiety of Mrs. Millamant's fortune in your possession, and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and testament of your deceased husband, Sir Jonathan Wishfort) by her disobedience in contracting herself against your consent or knowledge and by refusing the offered match with Sir Wilfull Witwoud, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

Lady Wishfort: My nephew was *non compos*, and could not make his addresses.

Fainall: I come to make demands—I'll hear no objections.

Lady Wishfort: You will grant me time to consider?

Fainall: Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand till more sufficient deeds can be perfected—which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the meanwhile I will go for the said instrument, and till my return you may balance this matter in your own discretion. [*Exit Fainall.*]

Lady Wishfort: This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel. Must I be subject to this merciless villain?

Mrs. Marwood: 'Tis severe indeed, madam, that you should smart for your daughter's wantonness.

Lady Wishfort: 'Twas against my consent that she married this barbarian, but she would have him, though her year was not out.—Ah! her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus! Well, that was my choice, this is hers: she is matched now with a witness.—I shall be mad!—Dear friend, is there no comfort for me? must I live to be confiscated at this rebelrate?—Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues too. [*Enter Mrs. Millamant and Sir Wilfull Witwoud.*]

Sir Wilfull: Aunt, your servant.

Lady Wishfort: Out, caterpillar! Call not me aunt! I know thee not!

Sir Wilfull: I confess I have been a little in disguise,[13] as they say.—'Sheart! and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I have committed no offence, aunt—and if I did I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke anything, I'll pay for't, and it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you I'm willing to marry my cousin; so pray let's all be friends. She and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

Lady Wishfort: How's this, dear niece? Have I any comfort? Can this be true?

Mrs. Millamant: I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, madam, and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you were misinformed. I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person and be a witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and for the contract that passed between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your ladyship's presence. He is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

Lady Wishfort: Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience, but I cannot admit that traitor—I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a gorgon, if I see him I fear I shall turn to stone, and petrify incessantly.

Mrs. Millamant: If you disoblige him, he may resent your refusal and insist

[12] Peter the Great visited England in 1697.

[13] Drunk.

upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

Lady Wishfort: Are you sure it will be the last time?—If I were sure of that—shall I never see him again?

Mrs. Millamant: Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

[illegible] travellers.—We are to be Pylades and Orestes,[11] he and I. He is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been [illegible] once, he shall come in; and see who'll [illegible] bottom of it.

Lady Wishfort: O dear Marwood, you are not going?

Mrs. Marwood: Not far, madam; I'll return immediately. [*Exit Mrs. Marwood.*] [*Re-enter Sir Wilfull and Mirabell.*]

Sir Wilfull: Look up, man, I'll stand by you. 'Sbud an she do frown, she can't kill you; besides—harkee, she dare not [illegible] fellow-traveller

Mirabell: If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offered to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion, I am too happy. Ah, madam, there was a time!—but let it be forgotten—I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high place I once held, of sighing at your feet. Nay, kill me not, by turning from me in disdain. I come not to plead for favor—nay, not for pardon; I am a suppliant only for your pity. I am going where I never shall behold you more—

Sir Wilfull: How, fellow-traveller! you shall go by yourself then.

Mirabell: Let me be pitied first, and afterwards forgotten.—I ask no more.

Sir Wilfull: By'r Lady, a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, [illegible] Come, come, forgive and forget, [illegible] Why, you must, an you are a C[illegible]tian.

Mirabell: Consider, madam, in reality you could not receive much prejudice. It was an innocent device; though I [illegible] think it is punishment enough that I have lost what in my heart I hold most dear, that to your cruel indignation I have offered up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet—nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

Sir Wilfull: An he does not move me, would I may never be o' the quorum! An it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again, I would I might never take shipping!—Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that. My contract went no farther than a little mouth glue, and that's hardly dry—one doleful sigh more [illegible]ny fellow-traveller, and 'tis dis[illegible]

[illegible] *Wishfort:* Well, nephew, upon your account—Ah, he has a false insinuating tongue!—Well sir, I will stifle my just resentment at my nephew's request. I will endeavor what I can to forget, but on proviso that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

Mirabell: It is in writing, and with papers of concern, but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

Lady Wishfort: [*Aside.*] Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue!—When I did not see him, I could have bribed a villain to his assassination; but

11 Faithful friends in Greek legend.

his appearance rakes the embers which have so long lain smothered in my breast. [*Enter Fainall and Mrs. Marwood.*]

Fainall: Your date of deliberation, madam, is expired. Here is the instrument; are you prepared to sign?

Lady Wishfort: If I were prepared, I am not impowered. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having matched herself by my direction to Sir Wilfull.

Fainall: That sham is too gross to pass on me—though 'tis imposed on you, madam.

Mrs. Millamant: Sir, I have given my consent.

Mirabell: And, sir, I have resigned my pretensions.

Sir Wilfull: And, sir, I assert my right and will maintain it in defiance of you, sir, and of your instrument. 'Sheart, an you talk of an instrument, sir, I have an old fox [15] by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, sir! It shall not be sufficient for a mittimus [16] or a tailor's measure. Therefore withdraw your instrument, sir, or by'r Lady, I shall draw mine.

Lady Wishfort: Hold, nephew, hold!

Mrs. Millamant: Good Sir Wilfull, respite your valor!

Fainall: Indeed! Are you provided of a guard, with your single beef-eater there? But I'm prepared for you, and insist upon my first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use, as pursuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant.—[*To Mrs. Millamant.*] I suppose, madam, your consent is not requisite in this case; nor, Mr. Mirabell, your resignation; nor, Sir Wilfull, your right. —You may draw your fox if you please, sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else, for here it will not avail. This, my Lady Wishfort, must be subscribed, or your darling daughter's turned adrift, like a leaky hulk, to sink or swim, as she and the current of this lewd town can agree.

[15] Sword. [16] Writ of commitment to prison.

Lady Wishfort: Is there no means, no remedy to stop my ruin? Ungrateful wretch! dost thou not owe thy being, thy subsistence, to my daughter's fortune?

Fainall: I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my possession.

Mirabell: But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands—I own I have not deserved you should owe any obligation to me; or else perhaps I could advise—

Lady Wishfort: Oh, what?—what? To save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to anything to come, to be delivered from this tyranny.

Mirabell: Aye, madam, but that is too late; my reward is intercepted. You have disposed of her who only could have made me a compensation for all my services. But be it as it may, I am resolved I'll serve you! You shall not be wronged in this savage manner.

Lady Wishfort: How! Dear Mr. Mirabell, can you be so generous at last? But it is not possible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match; you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

Mirabell: Will you? I'll take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

Lady Wishfort: Aye, aye;—anybody, anybody!

Mirabell: Foible is one, and a penitent. [*Enter Mrs. Fainall, Foible, and Mincing.*]

Mrs. Marwood: These corrupt things are brought hither to expose me. [*Aside.*] Oh, my shame! [*Mirabell and Lady Wishfort go to Mrs. Fainall and Foible.*]

Fainall: If it must all come out, why let 'em know it; 'tis but the way of the world. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will insist the more.

Foible: Yes, indeed, madam, I'll take my Bible oath of it.

Mincing: And so will I, mem.

Lady Wishfort: O Marwood, Marwood, art thou false? My friend deceive me? Hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

Mrs. Marwood: Have you so much ingratitude and injustice to give credit against your friend to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

Mincing: Mercenary, mem? I scorn your words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr. Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Messalina's[11] poems. Mercenary? No, if we would have been mercenary, we should have held our tongues; you would have bribed us sufficiently.

Fainall: Go, you are an insignificant thing!—Well, what are you the better for this? Is this Mr. Mirabell's expedient? I'll be put off no longer.—You, thing that was a wife, shall smart for this! I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy shame; your body shall be naked as your reputation.

Mrs. Fainall: I despise you and defy your malice!—You have aspersed me wrongfully—I have proved your falsehood! Go, you and your treacherous—I will not name it, but, starve together. Perish!

Fainall: Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear. Madam, I'll be fooled no longer.

Lady Wishfort: Ah, Mr. Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

Mirabell: Oh, in good time. Your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, madam. [*Enter Waitwell with a box of writings.*]

Lady Wishfort: O Sir Rowland!—Well, rascal!

Waitwell: What your ladyship pleases. I have brought the black box at last, madam.

Mirabell: Give it me. Madam, you remember your promise?

Lady Wishfort: Aye, dear sir.

Mirabell: Where are the gentlemen?

Waitwell: At hand, sir, rubbing their eyes—just risen from sleep.

Fainall: 'Sdeath, what's this to me? I'll not wait your private concerns. [*Enter Petulant and Witwoud.*]

Petulant: How now! What's the matter? Whose hand's out?

Witwoud: Heyday! What, are you all got together like players at the end of the last act?

Mirabell: You may remember, gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

Witwoud: Aye, I do; my hand I remember—Petulant set his mark.

Mirabell: You wrong him. His name is fairly written, as shall appear.—[*Undoing the box.*] You do not remember, gentlemen, anything of what that parchment contained?

Witwoud: No.

Petulant: Not I; I writ, I read nothing.

Mirabell: Very well, now you shall know.—Madam, your promise.

Lady Wishfort: Aye, aye, sir, upon my honor.

Mirabell: Mr. Fainall, it is now time that you should know that your lady, while she was at her own disposal, and before you had by your insinuations wheedled her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune—

Fainall: Sir! pretended!

Mirabell: Yes, sir. I say that this lady while a widow, having, it seems, received some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, which from her own partial opinion and fondness of you she could never have suspected—she did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends and of sages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this same as her act and deed to me in trust, and to the uses within mentioned. You may read if you please—[*holding out the parchment.*] though perhaps what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

Fainall: Very likely, sir. What's here?—Damnation! [*Reads.*] "A deed of conveyance of the whole estate real of

[11] Malapropism for *miscellaneous*

Arabella Languish, widow, in trust to Edward Mirabell."—Confusion!

Mirabell: Even so, sir; 'tis the way of the world, sir,—of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady?

Fainall: Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be revenged. [*Offers to run at Mrs. Fainall.*]

Sir Wilfull: Hold, sir! Now you may make your bear-garden flourish somewhere else, sir.

Fainall: Mirabell, you shall hear of this, sir, be sure you shall.—Let me pass, oaf! [*Exit Fainall.*]

Mrs. Fainall: Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment; you had better give it vent.

Mrs. Marwood: Yes, it shall have vent—and to your confusion, or I'll perish in the attempt. [*Exit Mrs. Marwood.*]

Lady Wishfort: O daughter, daughter! 'Tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

Mrs. Fainall: Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

Lady Wishfort: Well, Mr. Mirabell, you have kept your promise—and I must perform mine.—First, I pardon, for your sake, Sir Rowland there, and Foible. The next thing is to break the matter to my nephew—and how to do that—

Mirabell: For that, madam, give yourself no trouble; let me have your consent. Sir Wilfull is my friend. He has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engaged a volunteer in this action for our service, and now designs to prosecute his travels.

Sir Wilfull: 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her, and she loves him, and they deserve one another. My resolution is to see foreign parts—I have set on't—and when I'm set on't I must do't. And if these two gentlemen would travel too, I think they may be spared.

Petulant: For my part, I say little—I think things are best off or on.

Witwoud: 'Ygad, I understand nothing of the matter; I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-school.

Lady Wishfort: Well, sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

Mrs. Millamant: Why does not the man take me? Would you have me give myself to you over again?

Mirabell: Aye, and over and over again; [*kisses her hand*] I would have you as often as possibly I can. Well, Heaven grant I love you not too well; that's all my fear.

Sir Wilfull: 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're married; or if you will toy now, let us have a dance in the meantime, that we who are not lovers may have some other employment besides looking on.

Mirabell: With all my heart, dear Sir Wilfull. What shall we do for music?

Foible: Oh, sir, some that were provided for Sir Rowland's entertainment are yet within call. [*A dance.*]

Lady Wishfort: As I am a person, I can hold out no longer. I have wasted my spirits so to-day already, that I am ready to sink under the fatigue, and I cannot but have some fears upon me yet, that my son Fainall will pursue some desperate course.

Mirabell: Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account; to my knowledge his circumstances are such he must of force comply. For my part, I will contribute all that in me lies to a reunion; in the meantime, madam—[*to Mrs. Fainall*] let me before these witnesses restore to you this deed of trust. It may be a means, well-managed, to make you live easily together.

From hence let those be warned who mean to wed,
Lest mutual falsehood stain the bridal bed;
For each deceiver to his cost may find
That marriage-frauds too oft are paid in kind. [*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE

After our epilogue this crowd dismisses,
I'm thinking how this play'll be pulled to pieces.
But pray consider, ere you doom its fall,
How hard a thing 'twould be to please you all.
There are some critics so with spleen diseased,
They scarcely come inclining to be pleased:
And sure he must have more than mortal skill,
Who pleases anyone against his will
Then, all bad poets we are sure are foes,
And how their number's swelled, the town well knows:
In shoals I've marked 'em judging in the pit;
Though they're on no pretense for judgment fit,
But that they have been damned for want of wit.
Since when, they by their own offences taught,
Set up for spies on plays and finding fault.
Others there are whose malice we'd prevent;
Such who watch plays with scurrilous intent
To mark out who by characters are meant.
And though no perfect likeness they can trace,
Yet each pretends to know the copied face.
These with false glosses feed their own ill nature,
And turn to libel what was meant a satire
May such malicious fops this fortune find,
To think themselves alone the fools designed!
If any are so arrogantly vain,
To think they singly can support a scene,
And furnish fool enough to entertain.
For well the learn'd and the judicious know
That satire scorns to stoop so meanly low
As any one abstracted fop to show
For, as when painters form a matchless face,
They from each fair one catch some different grace,
And shining features in one portrait blend,
To which no single beauty must pretend;
So poets oft do in one piece expose
Whole *belles-assemblées* of coquettes and beaux.

NOTES ON *THE WAY OF THE WORLD*

I. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PLOT

We have already seen (see the Notes on Act II) that some of the reader's difficulty with the play lies in the fact that he is, at the start, expected to learn about a fairly large number of characters almost entirely through the accounts given of them by others. A more important source of confusion is that most of the complex relationships among these characters are presented to us in *brief explanatory statements* rather than *fully developed by dramatic interaction* of the characters. And when these statements come, as they often do, in advance of actions which we as yet grasp only dimly, we are quite likely to overlook their importance. If we do happen to miss, or grasp inadequately, a brief line which provides the key to a

action, we may very well go through a whole act in considerable uncertainty as to its relation to the general movement of the play. For example, Mirabell's purpose in having Waitwell pretend to be a nobleman in love with Lady Wishfort is described explicitly in only a few lines in Act II (p. 404a, 18 ff.) and in Act III (p. 413b, 1 ff.); if their purport is not fully caught, the whole business of the disguise and pretended love is likely to seem more a mystery, even though amusing, than a significant part of the plot.

Since Congreve uses this method, it is clear that actors and actresses on the one hand, and readers on the other, have an unusual responsibility for recognizing and giving special emphasis to such key lines. We may ask: can an author legitimately impose such extra burdens? Congreve, we feel rightly, does not give us enough help in keeping the plot straight. On the other hand, the rights which an author has with respect to the reader depend pretty largely upon what he is giving in return for the labor expended. If, like Plautus, he is giving us only farce (and in some ways Plautus's plot is easier to keep straight than Congreve's), we may feel little inclined to take much trouble in keeping clear about all the details of a complicated plot. But if, like Congreve, he is giving us, whether on comic or tragic level, a mature comment upon experience, then he may rightly ask us to follow him in the method which he has chosen for that comment. As we shall see, Congreve has a great deal to say that is worth our attention. Yet here we run into another special quality of *The Way of the World:* although the tangle of relationships is a means to an end (unlike Plautus's confusion, which is an end in itself), it is not the only means. That is, although we will do well to study out all the lines of action and keep them straight, in one sense that is not essential; at least it is not the most important exercise demanded of us. For, ultimately, Congreve speaks less by means of the *outcome* of his various plots and counter-plots than by the *tone* created by the speech, manner, and attitudes of the participants in, and the observers of, the various actions. Not that the action can be ignored: it is important that Mirabell and Millamant do find a successful solution to their problem: but it is more important still that they do it in a certain *way* and with complete maintenance of certain essential *attitudes* (which we shall discuss later). If it be argued that the play which we thus characterize must be undramatic because it depends rather on *talk* than on *action*, the answer is this: in a play where so much is accomplished by *tone*, the *talk* is a very important kind of action. The talk develops attitudes which clash with each other, and, still better, with conventional expectations; it develops character by revelation of basic attitudes.

Such considerations should be kept in mind when we learn that the play originally failed because of its plot and when we are given the standard criticism that the plot is too confused. These are important facts: but they still do not constitute a final condemnation of the play.

2. CONGREVE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS CHARACTERS

When we come to the important problem of Congreve's comment upon experience, we must first judge his attitudes toward his characters—a task complicated by the fact that these attitudes are far from meeting conventional expectations. In this matter such a seasoned critic as W. M. Thackeray has failed by misreading Congreve as a cynic, that is, one who believes the worst of human beings. It is ironic that such a charge should result from Congreve's method, which compliments the reader by assuming that the reader can distinguish good and bad even when the distinction is not made obvious.

Congreve, for instance, does not divide his characters into heroes and villains. He does not underline the goodness of his more admirable characters. He does not burn with righteous indignation when he presents such bad characters as Mrs. Marwood and Fainall; instead, he treats them with detachment by giving due play to their motives, their insight into others, their quickness, etc. He does not utterly deride the boobies such as the fops and Sir Wilfull; he allows them a measure of wit and acuteness. He *does not present Mirabell as a flawless hero; instead he shows Mirabell* very emphatically in "the way of the world" in his not only having had an affair with Millamant's cousin but also having married her off to the unpalatable Fainall as a cover-up; Congreve neither conceals these facts nor attempts to present Mirabell, in his new love for Millamant, as a changed or "converted" man. Finally, Congreve does not make Millamant into an obviously "sweet" or lovely heroine; she knows her way about in the world; she enjoys coquetry and the exercise of power; to grasp her essential charm we must see more than the glittering surface of her manner.

This is characterization at an adult level, and a naïve reader may think that it makes sense only if we regard the author as a sardonic observer of an insoluble human muddle. Such a reader will think that Congreve ought to have had the characters whom he regards favorably reject the artificial life of society and embrace a more direct, spontaneous way of life—especially in the matter of love. The only character, however, who rejects society is Sir Wilfull; but, though we are meant to sympathize to some extent with Sir Wilfull's shrewdness and honesty, it is clear that his gaucheries are still meant to be comic. That is, he is also measured by the author's criterion; though he aids the lovers, he does not himself provide a criterion for their conduct.

Society has its shortcomings, then, and the country also has its shortcomings. But this fact does not mean that Congreve believes that nowhere are values to be found. The fact that we reject some things which the characters do, while at the same time we accept other things, shows that a system of values is operating in the play. Our critical problem is to define them—not altogether an easy task since, though they do not coincide with, they do not wholly differ from, the standards of conduct upon which fashionable society in the play preens itself. Yet we should not make the

mistake of thinking that Congreve approvingly presents a picture of a cynically heartless society. Nor, on the other hand, does he give us, with the ease of the sentimentalist, conventional reassurances about "natural" and spontaneous love, the victory of good over evil, and the triumph of "pure love." In fact, the elimination of all traces of sentimentality is one of the striking achievements of the play.

3. CONGREVE'S SYSTEM OF VALUES

What, then, are Congreve's values? *The Way of the World*, we may say, represents *values as achieved by discipline*. Discipline means control, order, the rejection of extremes. What we should go on to observe, then, is how, through the action of the play, Congreve does reject extremes.

Manners Versus Emotions. We are not asked to choose between raw, uninhibited but sincere emotion on the one hand, and artificial, insincere manners on the other. Such a dilemma is oversimple and therefore false. But many of the characters are caught in this dilemma: Sir Wilfull is impaled on the former horn, Witwoud and Petulant on the latter. Sir Wilfull can say, "The *fashion's* a fool . . ."; Witwoud can say (of Millamant), "And for my part, but that it is almost a *fashion* to admire her, I should—hark'ee—to tell you a secret, . . .—I shall never break my heart for her."

At one extreme, the matter-of-fact Sir Wilfull rejects romantic love, the niceties of courtship, gracefully extravagant compliments; when Millamant shows indifference to him, he dismisses the matter with: "When you're disposed, when you're disposed. Now's as well as another time, . . ." At the other extreme, the fops are for lovers' conventions as ends in themselves, for nicety, delicacy of taste, and wit. But their emphasis lies on the mastery of the mechanism rather than on anything to be achieved by the mechanism. For them, therefore, the poetry of courtship is really as meaningless as it is for Sir Wilfull.

Congreve presents a nice irony here: opposite extremes tend to coalesce. When drunk, Petulant and Sir Wilfull take precisely the same line. Petulant, drunk, can say to Millamant: "If you are not handsome, what then, if I have a humor to prove it? If I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself. . . . I'll go to bed to my maid." When his chivalrous manners are peeled off—and they are worn by him merely as a modish garment—he is exactly like Sir Wilfull, who scorns manners and cries out, at the mention of wenches, "Ahey! wenches; where are the wenches?"

Mirabell and Millamant. The problem of extremes also engages the hero and heroine, though for them discipline means not only the rejection of unsuitable extremes but also the *reconciliation* of objectives that, in the society in which they live, are usually found in opposition. Millamant, for instance, would like to marry Mirabell and save her fortune too (maybe she *would* sacrifice it; since this is comedy, she is not really tested). But much more important—the play really hinges on this issue—is that Millamant wants to save, not only her lover and her fortune, but romantic love

and marriage too; to have marriage, but also a certain tone and dignity that, like romantic love—as she sees—do not always go with marriage.* The marriage is too often one of convenience, of money or social position; the poetry of love is dropped after courtship or hardened into a meaningless conventional form for appearance's sake. The problem of Mirabell and Millamant is to define and create a situation, to discover a discipline, whereby love and dignity and marriage may be combined.

Congreve highlights this problem in two places. When Lady Wishfort, disillusioned, takes refuge in the mawkish poetry of "I would retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves and be shepherdesses" she shows what is *not* the way out—escape, an undisciplined jumping from one extreme to another. On the other hand, the famous bargaining scene in Act IV shows Mirabell and Millamant dealing directly with their problem—seeking the terms, the discipline, by which they may realize their complex objective. The serious implications are all there, though the tone is that of the finest comedy—one of urbane and witty gaiety. Sentimentalists may miss the feeling, and moralists may miss the seriousness (just as neither may know how to deal with Falstaff and Hal); Congreve's achievement is, like that of his characters, the avoidance of both lushness and solemnity.

4. CONGREVE'S VARIATIONS ON THE THEME OF LOVE

Why is the bargaining scene so successful? For one thing, because the various stipulations and demands, though made in a manner that may suggest selfishness or indulgence of whim, actually embody sound critiques [illegible] Taken alone, [illegible] ok vain, con- [illegible] he rest of the play. In fact, the relationship of Mirabell and Millamant is to be seen in the context of all the relationships of the play, from which it receives considerable qualification.

The theme is love, of which Congreve has presented an amazing number of variations—not for variety's sake, but as the background which defines the central problem of the play. The Fainalls, for instance, had married without love at all—he for money, she to cover up an amour. Lady Wishfort, whose chief concern is sex, is offered pretended passion by Waitwell, a parody of romantic courtship. Fainall and Marwood carry on an illicit relationship, marred by his distrust and her halfheartedness. Marwood's passion for Mirabell offers another variation, unrequited love, though the

* The phrase "romantic love" perhaps needs further definition, for the word "romantic" has been used in so many meanings and the whole phrase has become so vulgarized in recent years that its use here may be misleading. Yet we need a term which will not only assert the [illegible]

"love" is largely a medley of desire, pride, pique, and the wish to make Fainall jealous. Here we have a sharp contrast between her and Mrs. Fainall, who with equanimity sees her former lover laying suit to another woman. The desire for the contrast may have influenced Congreve here, since he leaves us somewhat uncertain about Mrs. Fainall's character; perhaps we are to assume that the earlier affair has burned itself out into a kind of general amiability, but the evidence does not clarify the matter finally. Then there are the bachelors—Sir Wilfull, Petulant, and Witwoud—to whom love is either a fashion or a convenience, and the servants, Waitwell and Foible, whose marriage, like that of the Fainalls, is one of convenience—in this case, their betters' convenience. Yet there is a variation here, for the pair seem to be in love: Foible sounds sincere enough when, upon her husband's being arrested, she wails about becoming "a Bridewell bride."

Ironically enough, they are the only happy couple in the play. It is perhaps significant that they are outside the world of fashion and its temptations. They can see it in perspective, and Congreve definitely presents them as seeing the other characters as they are. Ironically, they are not at the mercy of the conventions because they are *beneath* the conventions. Mirabell and Millamant must recognize the conventions, within which they aim for the same working relationship. Waitwell and Foible, by showing the possibility of domestic harmony, offer a kind of dramatic intimation of what Mirabell and Millamant may achieve.

The Way of the World represents, then, almost a symphonic pattern in which the theme of love receives a variety of treatments, ranging from the somber—the Fainall-Marwood affair is bitter, perhaps, as Bonamy Dobrée has suggested, even verging on the tragic—to the burlesque, which we see in Waitwell's pretended assault on Lady Wishfort. Somewhere between those extremes Mirabell and Millamant *must* plot their course—facing the opposition not merely of the Marwoods who would "mar" their affair and of the Fainalls scheming to get their money, but, more importantly, of a society which, because of its own addiction to extremes (of conventionality. sentimentality, pretence, etc.), must naturally be opposed to their search for balance and discipline. But this latter struggle becomes also a struggle with themselves: have they the inner stamina to adhere to standards of their own? If not, Millamant will "dwindle into a wife" and Mirabell be "enlarged into a husband"—two phrases, by the way, which beautifully epitomize the stereotyped marital relationship in which the essential dignity of the individual is lost. The loss of that dignity is what Congreve shows in the others: Fainall is "enlarged," Mrs. Fainall is "dwindled," Marwood can talk independently to Fainall because she is not tied to him, Lady Wishfort is only too eager to dwindle.

Thus the way of the world gives meaning to the bargaining scene, in which the participants struggle with the world and with themselves. Millamant imposes conditions, but she is equally willing to have Mirabell impose conditions: "Speak and spare not," she says. Some of her chief

injunctions regard their joint conduct rather than her own prerogatives. And if each one does speak at times for himself, how else could Congreve convey the terms of a self-imposed discipline? For each one to outline in detail his *own* schedule of good behavior would be very close to sentimentality. But the play does not become soft and effusive. Congreve always keeps the tone firm; the wit in the bargaining scene is conspicuous.

5. CONGREVE'S USE OF IRONY

Very important in Congreve's management of the bargaining scene—as well as in the whole treatment of the love-affair—is the irony. On one plane it is the irony of lovers doing the opposite of what is expected of them, namely, haggling over rights and privileges and working out itemized contracts. On another plane, there is the [illegible]

[illegible] lovers is not trivial; and there is a real wistfulness—intensified by and yet, at the same time, protected from sentimentality by, the humor—in Millamant's exclamation, "Let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all."

Thus Congreve has Mirabell and Millamant approach all issues through teasing and banter. They are aware of each other's faults, as they well may be, for they are also aware of their [illegible] in which Mirabell says, "I like her [illegible] faults," is significant. Mirabell is I[illegible] ironic about his infatuation for her. Note the climax, in which he says of her frailties, "They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties, and in all probability in a little time longer I shall like 'em as well." To like her faults risks the sentimental, but the risk is completely countered by the playful, and yet shrewdly realistic, statement of his devotion to his own faults. His love is real, but he remains ironically perceptive.

There should be no doubt of the underlying genuineness of feeling. for one thing, no one not a lover (or an outright enemy) would take so much trouble to tease and joke about someone else. But the feeling may be missed by someone who takes the speeches only at their surface meaning, or someone who demands a direct avowal of feeling and has not the sophistication to grasp the fact that emotion may be presented indirectly.

Congreve makes matters sure, however, when he has Millamant say outright, "Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing, for I find I love him violently"; she makes her confession, true, but even that she balances with a realistic view of future possibilities. Congreve demands more of us in Mirabell's comparable line at the close of the play, "Well, Heaven grant I love you not too well; that's all my fear." Reflection is needed to show us that the ironic playfulness would be possible only to one completely sure of his own feelings.

Can you find other instances of the indirect conveyance of real feelings?

6. THE RELATION OF THE INTRIGUE PLOT TO THE COMEDY AS A WHOLE

We have already seen (cf. Sections 4 and 5) that Congreve has his main characters engaging in two struggles—one against external forces that would interfere with their marriage, the other against themselves, against their tendency to give in to the way of the world. Congreve has done a very interesting thing in combining two struggles that are on quite different levels: one is a familiar *intrigue* plot, common to light plays of the period; the other is *comedy of character*, growing out of the struggle to combine love and dignity and marriage, to give them a place in the world without conforming to the way of the world.

The question then arises: is there any real relationship between the two struggles? May they even be contradictory? (Compare the monetary "reward" in this play with that in *The School for Scandal.*) At best, it hardly seems that the qualities which Mirabell and Millamant exhibit in their struggle with themselves are in any way necessary in the intrigue plot: a gross Mirabell and a heartless and superficial Millamant might very well have succeeded in dealing with the obstacles set up by Fainall, Mrs. Marwood, and Lady Wishfort.

The Intrigue Plot as Symbol. In one sense the intrigue plot serves to indicate that the tone of the play is light rather than solemn. But a more important defense for using the intrigue plot and combining it with a study of character is that the former does symbolize on one level, if not a very high level, the more important victory which the lovers achieve in their struggle with themselves: the way of the world can be mastered; the happy ending can be achieved. If one can conquer the intrigues of the world, one may also be able to conquer its conventions. To gain the consent of Lady Wishfort, then, is of less importance in itself (the lovers might say farewell to the fortune; nothing in the play indicates that they would not do this if necessary) than as a symbol, as it were, of their self-mastery. For the paradox of the situation is that the lovers' ability to master the way of the world in their own private love—to come to terms with it without being brought to terms by it—allows them to override the outside obstacles to their marriage.

The Intrigue in Act V. This truth is well exemplified by a part of the action in the final act. Act V is burdened with immense complications, some of which, of course, we have been quite able to foresee—Lady Wishfort's angry disillusionment about Waitwell, her anguish at her daughter's adultery and at Fainall's demands, and her getting a truer picture of Marwood. But halfway through the act there is suddenly made the surprising discovery that Mirabell and Millamant are now prepared to resign each other, and Millamant to accept Sir Wilfull—all, apparently, to please Lady Wishfort. As a result, Lady Wishfort's wrath is mitigated, Mirabell is admitted to her and can further soften her by his personal charm; and finally he is able to effect a rescue which is the determining factor in causing

Lady Wishfort to decide to withdraw her opposition to his marrying

everything, accept their resignation of each other (she has had enough reason to be vindictive). Their acceptance of this possibility gives evidence of a high degree of willingness to face the consequences, of discipline and control. Thus, as we have said, their self-mastery is the clue to their mastery of the external situation.

Mirabell's possession of the deed which prevents Fainall from securing his wife's property belongs of course in the category of *deus ex machina* (cf. the uncle's settling everything up in *The School for Scandal*). But there is this to be said for it: rather than being a mere scheme to make things "come out right," it does fit into and help exhibit the character of Mirabell. If he did marry Arabella to Fainall, he at least also took measures to protect her against Fainall; we see his forcefulness and his essential trustworthiness in the fact that she adopts his plan. Our feeling that the solution is brought about by a *deus ex machina*, then, is due less to Congreve's going outside of character than to his not warning us what is up, that is, to his using surprise instead of expectation.*

The Plot as an Index of Attitude. Actually the plot, flimsy and involved as it is, succeeds rather well in emphasizing the special problem which confronts Congreve's hero and heroine. The qualities in them which interest Congreve are those highly civilized virtues of insight, understanding, and a sense of proportion.

The person possessed of such virtues has too much knowledge to take seriously things which are finally unimportant; too much sense of humor, to take himself too seriously; and he has learned that his way through a brittle world of appearances and shows—the world of "society" in any age—is to maintain a lively sense of the transience of things and their relative unimportance. This is not to say that he believes in nothing—that he has no values. But his allegiance to those more permanent values in which he does believe he may express

observation, or jest. Take Millamant

up her hair with verse, never with pr

ficially in keeping with Witwoud's more heavy-footed wit, but it is not inanely frivolous. It speaks volumes about the merits of the usual verse of lovers and what it is good for, but it delightfully distinguishes between

* For some readers the surprise may be qualified somewhat by the following bit of "preparation." Mirabell, in preparing his scheme to ensnare Lady Wishfort by "marrying" her to the supposed Sir Rowland, took, as we remember, some pains to insure that the marriage

the lover who has written his love letter in prose and the one who has at least taken the trouble, doubtless by dint of biting his pen, to put his into verse; and lastly, it expresses Millamant's amused contempt for poor Witwoud, who is so proud of his wit and of his ability to speak entertainingly to a fine lady.

The Attitude of the Lovers. In general, Millamant and Mirabell throughout the play practice the Biblical injunction to "answer a fool according to his folly," but they are far from being fools themselves. They know, too, how thoroughly out of place would be a "lyric cry from the heart" in a world devoted to fashion and to keeping up appearances. Moreover, they know how easy it is to deceive oneself into thinking that maudlin sentimentality—if only it be one's own sentimentality—is really serious emotion. They prefer not to risk the expression of their love in statements that may, in their possible extravagance, be confused with the cant of affected gallantry, on the one hand, or with overlush sentimentality on the other. Their speech is continually bathed in irony; but their deeper feelings can survive the ironical and witty expressions in which they are expressed. Indeed, one can go further and say that their sincerity is guaranteed by the fact that in expressing their affection for each other, neither Mirabell or Millamant relaxes that keen awareness of the deviousness of the way of the world of which the irony is a symptom. The lovers, then, are not sensitive innocents immersed in a world of folly and knavery. If they maintain a kind of innocence, it is because they are able to carry out the Biblical injunction to be as "wise as serpents," though as "innocent as doves." This is the charm of the lovers, of Millamant in particular. She remains charming, high-spirited, gay, throughout the play: to be intelligent does not require that she become a cynic, and, being in love, on the other hand, does not require that she stifle her intelligence. If we as readers feel that the plot on which the play rests is a sort of tempest in a teapot—intrigue and counterintrigue, cluttered up with some rather ludicrous and farcical exposures, we may be sure that Mistress Millamant would be the first to agree with us. In its intrigue and in its farcical extravagance the plot is but a heightened form of the way of the world which she is able to see through, and thus triumph over. It calls for the ironic playfulness so neatly exemplified in Witwoud's line in the final scene: "What, are you all got together, like players at the end of the last act?"

QUESTIONS

1. What examples can you find, besides those already referred to, of key explanatory lines which the reader must not fail to understand fully if he is to follow successfully the details of subsequent action?

2. Study all the evidence on the attitude which Congreve takes to Sir Wilfull.

3. In the bargaining scene in Act IV, some of the demands made are trivial, some less so. Note which ones have to do directly with important matters.

4. What facts make the final disgrace of Marwood especially ironic?

5. Study Lady Wishfort's speech in Act V about the bringing-up of her daughter (p. 434b, 22 ff.). Some of her remarks sound very much like contemporary criticism of the theatre and of other modes of entertainment by the Rev. Jeremy Collier and others What purpose might Congreve have had in thus reproducing their points of view?

6. What are the indications, throughout Acts IV and V, that Lady Wishfort, when she is outside the realm of her chief obsession, is not wholly unable to see things as they are? Is anything gained by giving her such ability?

7. We have already suggested that the adoption of the point of view of "the world" is one distinguishing mark of comedy. For another clue to the nature of comedy the reader might consult that part of the last act in which Mirabell appears. It is noteworthy that it is his personal charm, more than anything else, which influences the direction of events; on that ground he is largely forgiven various misdeeds. Might it be correct, then, to suggest that comedy is concerned with the realm of "personality" rather than, say, of morality or other extra-personal values? That personal charm is the chief standard of judgment? How would this apply to *The School for Scandal?*

8. The student may find it very useful to make some comparison of Mirabell and Charles Surface, since the latter also represents the way of the world. But note how much milder an example of the man of the world Charles Surface is. Is it correct to say that Mirabell also has some—not all—of the qualities of Joseph Surface? Might this thinning out of the character of Mirabell be partially responsible for our feeling that the treatment of Charles Surface does not escape sentimentality? Judging by the two plays, what inferences can you draw about the difference between comedy at the beginning and at the end of the eighteenth century? Likewise, compare Waitwell with old Rowley.

9. We have said that Mirabell's possession of the deed from Mrs. Fainall comes as a big surprise at the end. Can you find, however, any "buried" references which indicate that some sort of document is to be introduced? See the last part of Act IV.

10. Compare the treatment of the "unities" in this play with that in Ibsen's *Rosmersholm.* Note especially the tightening up of the unity of time in Congreve's play.

11. Bonamy Dobrée suggests that in the relationship between Fainall and Marwood Congreve moves toward the tragic. Do you find this a sound judgment? Compare, for instance, Marwood and Shakespeare's *Cleopatra* does [illegible] ess of the latter? To what exten [illegible] Dobrée also sees in Lady Wish [illegible] judgment?

12. [illegible] arwood with the final exit of the "villains" at the end of *The School for Scandal*

13. The last speech of the play hints the reconciliation of the Fainalls. Would this be possible in a problem play? In tragedy?

14. We have already pointed out two types of comedy to be discerned in this play: the intrigue level, and the level of comedy of character. Besides these we may observe farce (the drunken scenes), comedy of wit (even the fools make some very witty remarks), and parody (as in the Lady Wishfort courtship scenes). Which of these, if any, are ingredients in what is called "comedy of manners"? How does the comedy here differ from that in *Henry IV?* Or that in Shaw's *Major Barbara?* (See Appendix A.)

The Mirabell-Millamant affair is obviously the focal point of the various gradations of comedy in the play. How well does it bring them all into focus?

15. How many of the names of the *dramatis personæ* give some clue to their characters?

16. We have discussed the play as a symphonic pattern of variations, on the theme of love. It may be possible, also, to discern other such patterns which serve as minor motifs in the play—motifs which support and amplify the main theme.

a. Note, for instance, the different variations upon the theme of age. Foible tells Lady Wishfort that Mirabell had called her "superannuated"; Millamant applies the same adjective to Sir Wilfull. Much, in fact, is made of the age of Sir Wilfull. In the middle of Act III Millamant makes some rather sharp remarks to Marwood on the subject of age (p. 415b, 48 ff.). Can you find any other references to age which would help support the hypothesis that there is a youth-and-age motif in the play?

b. Note, also, that the words which make up the title of the play are spoken at various times in the play. Find all the passages in question and see whether they shed any light on the total meaning. Does the phrase acquire a different tone as it is used by different characters? Note especially the variation in the final use by Mirabell near the end.

c. Finally, there are a number of variations in the language used by different characters, even though the language of wit is at one time or another used by almost all of them. There is, for instance, Lady Wishfort's "boudoir Billingsgate," of which we have already spoken. There is the rather gauche speech of Sir Wilfull. There is the sharp contrast between Waitwell's language as he "proposes" to Lady Wishfort and that addressed to Foible, his real wife. There are different levels of wit—that of Mirabell and Millamant, and that of Witwoud and Petulant. At different times we have effects dependent upon the repetition of the words of one character by another. Do you find other evidences of the special use of language? Do all such uses support the central theme of the play?

17. Might it be argued that the problem of Mirabell and Millamant with regard to the social world is in any way comparable to the problem of Prince Hal with regard to the political world? Note that both—the lovers in one play and the Prince in the other—must undergo certain disciplines, reconcile certain conflicting forces, avoid certain extremes. Does this parallel, if it holds good, shed further light on the nature of comedy? If the parallel does hold, what character in Congreve's play might be said to have a role or position comparable to Falstaff's?

APPENDIX A

Other Plays—Analyses and Questions

THESE exercises on additional plays are intended to provide opportunity for a more complete study of the drama than is made possible by the plays which can be printed in a volume of this size. The instructor [illegible] lists of some of the texts or editions in which the various plays may be found.

An instructor who prefers a historical approach will doubtless wish to use the plays in chronological order (Appendix B will show their relationship to the historical pattern). The instructor who uses simply a critical approach to different types of drama might either take up these plays after he has finished the body of the text or else use these plays along with the others. In general, of course, the plays (which are arranged alphabetically by author) may be taken up in any order which the instructor prefers. The following table merely suggests an order which seems profitable to the editors. It indicates at what stage in a course the plays may, in their opinion, most suitably be used and, where possible, connections—by resemblance or contrast—that may be made between these plays and those printed in the body of the text.

SIMPLER TYPES

Shakespeare, *Comedy of Errors* (Plautus, *Menaechmi*—a source of Shakespeare's play)
Second Shepherds' Play (Plautus, *Menaechmi*—farce, *Everyman*—religious drama)
Morton, *Speed the Plough* (Plautus, *Menaechmi*—farce, Lillo, *The London Merchant*—melodrama)

INTERMEDIATE

Maugham, *The Circle* (Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*—similar plot and tone)
Rice, *Street Scene* (Ibsen, *Rosmersholm*—problem play)
Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Congreve, *Way of the World*—treatment of love; Shakespeare, *Henry IV*—treatment of character)
Lope de Vega, *The King the Greatest Alcalde* (Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, and Ibsen, *Rosmersholm*—political problem, poetry)
Shaw, *Major Barbara* (Sheridan, *School for Scandal*, and Congreve, *Way of the World*—comedy types)
Howard, *The Silver Cord* (Ibsen, *Rosmersholm*—problem play, psychological interest)

MORE MATURE TYPES

Aeschylus, *Oresteia*
Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*
Euripides, *Hippolytus*
O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra*
Racine, *Phaedra*
Synge, *Riders to the Sea*

(All these plays belong, in different ways, to the general realm of tragedy and therefore offer grounds of comparison with *Everyman*, *The London Merchant*, and *Rosmersholm* to the extent that the latter partake of tragedy. These tragedies in the Appendix offer a fertile field for comparison among themselves. There is room also for intensive study of the poetry.)

ORESTEIA

By AESCHYLUS

and

MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA *

By EUGENE O'NEILL

It will be interesting and valuable for the student to make a detailed comparison of *The Oresteia* with *Mourning Becomes Electra*. In a sense it may seem an unrewarding task (and one which may be unfair to either dramatist), since the two trilogies are so far removed from each other in time and since their relations to their respective civilizations are so different. Moreover, as the perceptive student will soon realize, the purposes of the authors are radically different.

But this last statement provides the best justification for making the comparison. Through such a comparison the student may perhaps best arrive at each author's intention, a subject which is interesting and important to any student of drama. One may go on to point out that the later dramatist has definitely invited a comparison: his theme at least superficially resembles that of Aeschylus, and his characters balance those of Aeschylus—Mannon: Agamemnon; Christine: Clytemnestra; Lavinia: Electra; Brant: Aegisthus; Orin: Orestes, etc. Indeed, even details of the stage set are reminiscent of Greek tragedy: O'Neill describes the Mannon house as "a large building of the Greek temple type that was in vogue in the first half of the nineteenth century."

* Of the rather numerous translations of the *Oresteia*, only the later ones are mentioned here. That of E. H. Plumptre is in Vol. 2 of *Tragedies and Fragments*, Boston, n.d.; of Lewis Campbell, in *Seven Plays*, The World's Classics, Oxford, n.d.; that of Herbert Weir Smith in Vol. 2 of the Loeb Library edition of Aeschylus, New York, 1926–1927; that of Gilbert Murray in *Ten Greek Plays*, ed. Lane Cooper, New York, 1930, and in *Fifteen Greek Plays*, ed. Lane Cooper, New York, 1943; that of E. D. A. Morshead in Vol. 1 of *The Complete Greek Drama*, eds. W. S. Oates and Eugene O'Neill, Jr., New York, 1938.

Mourning Becomes Electra was published in New York, 1931, and appears also in *Nine Plays*, New York, 1932, and in Vol. 2 of *Plays*, New York, 1941.

Perhaps the best way to manage such a comparison is to observe the relationship between the comparable parts of the two trilogies.

Agamemnon and *Homecoming*

1. Compare the motivation of Clytemnestra and Christine. Is each dramatist fair to his character? Aeschylus makes primary, of course, Clytemnestra's desire for vengeance for Agamemnon's killing of their child, but he also gives Agamemnon a trace of "hubris," pride (in his own power), and has him order Clytemnestra to welcome Cassandra, whom he has brought back as concubine. O'Neill makes Christine's love for Brant primary, though he does suggest a psychological explanation for her earlier estrangement from Mannon. What difference of general intention is shown by the two treatments of this motivation? What is the effect upon the dramatic "stature" of each woman? Presumably Clytemnestra once loved her husband, whereas Christine has never loved hers. Does this fact render her deed more terrible and ironic than Christine's?

2. Aeschylus does not introduce Electra in this play at all. Why does O'Neill bring Lavinia into his? What function does she perform?

3. The threats to Clytemnestra and the suggestions of the vengeance that will fall upon her are voiced, in the *Agamemnon*, by the Chorus of old men; in *Homecoming* the threats are spoken by Lavinia. What is the difference in effect? Does the method make O'Neill's play less general and public, more private and "psychological"?

4. One of the finest passages in the *Agamemnon* is Cassandra's prophecy as she stands before the doomed house of Atreus and describes the Furies which she sees settled upon its roof. Is there any comparable passage in O'Neill's play? O'Neill too sees his House of Mannon living under a curse. What is the nature of that curse? Does O'Neill succeed in making it more inward and intangible than that which haunts the House of Atreus? Is the interpretation of the curse given by Aeschylus more primitive and therefore more gross?

The Libation-Bearers and *The Hunted*

1. The motive of Electra in wishing to avenge her father is relatively more straightforward: she grieves for him and she hates his murderers. The motive of Lavinia is complex. Why has O'Neill complicated it? In the interest of plausibility? In the interest of "psychology"?

2. Orin is decidedly weaker than is Orestes. His mother and sister struggle over Orin, each trying to win him to her side. Why has O'Neill felt it necessary to make this basic change in the character? What is the motive, conscious or unconscious, which drives him to kill?

3. Is Orestes in the scene in which his mother begs for her life [illegible] struggle that goes on in his mind? Does his speech following his execution of his mother and her paramour suggest the struggle? (The speech of triumph breaks down into an argument that he has been justified, and this in turn into his horrified vision of [illegible] attempt to assure Orestes that these are merely "fancies," at which he bursts out with "Can you not see them?"

5. In O'Neill's play the revulsion of Orin at his mother's death is given a great deal of prominence. Does it involve a more subtle psychology than that of Orestes? Why has O'Neill found it necessary to complicate it with jealousy?

The Eumenides and *The Haunted*

With these final plays in the trilogies the dramatists move much further apart, and their radical difference in intention becomes very clear indeed. In *The Eumenides* the curse is purged away, the deities of heaven and the lower world are reconciled, and a new order of justice is established. The trilogy ends "publicly" with a religious rite and with a song of rejoicing on the lips of the worshippers. Good has come out of Evil, though not without great suffering: the warring claims of reason and instinct come into harmony.

In *The Haunted* the curse is confirmed. Lavinia gives up her hopeless struggle to lay the ghosts of guilt. She orders the shutters of the Mannon house to be nailed up and walks into the house, closing the door behind her. She intends to "punish" herself "until the curse is paid out and the last Mannon is let to die."

In a sense, therefore, the O'Neill play may seem to be darker, more bitter, and *therefore* more "tragic" than that of Aeschylus, which, indeed, ends on a note of triumph—is indeed one of the Greek "happy tragedies." But before we draw any such hasty conclusion, it will be wise to see with what, ultimately, each dramatist is concerned.

It ought to be apparent that Aeschylus is throughout the three plays concerned with the moral meaning of the actions which he describes. Each of the characters is caught between warring claims—Clytemnestra between a desire to avenge her daughter and her vows to her husband; Orestes, between the necessity to avenge his father and his filial ties to his mother; Agamemnon, between his love for his daughter Iphigenia and his position as commander of the Greek host. Even the deities are so caught: Apollo would assert the right of *lex talionis;* the Eumenides, the claims of blood-guilt incurred by the murder of one close in blood. Whether or not Aeschylus has reconciled these conflicting claims, or whether, having reconciled them for his day and time, he has also provided the modern reader with a satisfying reconciliation, he has at least been concerned with the nature of justice. The action interests him in terms of moral significance. He continually raises the question of *why* as he explores the evils which come from the house of Atreus.

O'Neill, on the other hand, clearly seems interested in the "psychological how"—the tangled web of complexes that accounts for the actions of his characters. Here he has drawn heavily upon the discoveries of students of abnormal psychology like Freud. But does his drama transcend the "case history"? Does his interest become more than "clinical"?

The student should ponder these questions before trying to decide the issue of which trilogy is more nearly typical of tragedy. The conclusion of the *Oresteia* may seem "happier" than that of *Mourning Becomes Electra,* but the former attempts to arrive at a sort of equilibrium of moral forces—an equilibrium achieved in other Greek plays by the death or ruin of the protagonist; and tragedy, considered historically, has always manifested such a concern.

1. Why, in terms of the dramatist's purpose, can Electra be left out of *The Eumenides* completely while Lavinia comes to dominate *The Haunted?*

2. Is Orestes let off too lightly in *The Eumenides?* If he is justified, in what terms is he justified, and what is the nature of the qualifications which, the dramatist suggests, surround his justification?

3. Granted, in the case of both the Greek and the American play, that the circumstances depicted are most unusual, which play is the less "special" of the two? Which the more universal?

4. At the end of Act III of *The Haunted* Lavinia, who has hated her

mother, exclaims, "I'm Mother's daughter—not one of you. I'll live in spite of you!" How does O'Neill account for this *volte face?* Point out other shifts of the sort in the sympathies of the two Mannon children, and account for them.

5. In *The Eumenides* Orestes, after the verdict in his favor, leaves the scene, though the debate between the deities is far from settled. Does his retirement point to the fact that the problem in which he is involved is larger than his own fate, and that the dramatist wants to put the final emphasis on a general principle, not upon the fate of a particular individual?

6. The deities who take the stage in *The Eumenides* are moved by the passions of human beings: they quarrel, become angry, maintain their rights, etc. Yet do they succeed in symbolizing principles? If so, what principle does Apollo symbolize? The Eumenides' Zeus? Athene?

7. Does the use of the Chorus give Aeschylus any special advantage over O'Neill? What particular function is carried out by the Chorus in each of the three plays? Does it ever aid in presenting the "psychology" of character? In pointing up the moral problems and the moral significances?

8. How fair has Aeschylus been in presenting the claims of his various opposed characters? Why is fairness necessary in terms of his general purpose? How fair has O'Neill been in [illegible] purpose?

9. How heavily does O'Neill's trilogy lean upon that of Aeschylus? That is, does O'Neill utilize the reader's knowledge of the *Oresteia* in building up the effects of his own play?

10. Are the conflicting principles represented by Apollo and the Eumenides analogous in any way to the conflicting principles in *Rosmersholm?* Could we compare the Eumenides with the White Horses in Ibsen's play?

11. A student who wishes to go outside the plays in this book might compare the management of the guilty conscience in *Macbeth* with that in *The Eumenides*, especially in the scenes in which Macbeth and Orestes see the apparitions not visible to the others.

12. Another excursion into additional plays might profitably take the student to T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*, in which, as in the *Oresteia*, the Eumenides not only are actually present but also undergo the same transformation into a source of good. Work out the details of the parallel. The comparison between Eliot's and O'Neill's adaptation of classical materials should be a significant one.

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL *

By T. S. ELIOT

Since *Murder in the Cathedral* is a play in verse, the student will have to attend carefully to the poetry, which is not to be thought of as a kind of outer coating, a kind of decoration which is external to the action of the play. Rather, it is in terms of the poetry that we shall come into an experience of the really important dramatic action that makes the play.

We shall understand why this must be so when we reflect that the main action is that within Thomas himself, an internal struggle; indeed, with regard to the external conflict with the knights who murder him, Thomas will seem to be passive; and one of the knights, later

* This play was published in New York in 1935.

in the play, actually accuses him of inviting his own death. Moreover, Eliot has chosen as his chorus (who comment upon the action and who indicate most specifically the impingement of Becket's murder upon the people) a group of old women, creatures who are helpless and can affect the action in no way at all. The poetry spoken by the Chorus and by Thomas thus has a very heavy burden placed upon it: it must convey with subtlety and power that which is important and dramatic but which, from the nature of things, can hardly be conveyed by external action.

It is possible, even so, that the student may conclude that the play is too "passive" to be effective drama, and that the death of a martyr is a hopeless subject for a drama. In attempting to judge this matter, the student might take into account the questions which follow. But as he embarks on an exploration of this question, he may note that Mr. Eliot himself is quite aware of the problem. Becket himself reflects upon it, as this passage in his sermon indicates: ". . . we do not think of a martyr simply as a good Christian who has been killed because he is a Christian: for that would be solely to mourn. We do not think of him simply as a good Christian who has been elevated to the company of the Saints: for that would be simply to rejoice. . . . Saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian *martyrdom* the effect of a man's will to become a Saint . . ."

1. How do the speeches of the Three Priests (after the Herald's announcement) provide exposition? How do they look forward to the events to come? Consider particularly the comments on Thomas's "pride."

2. Consider carefully the speeches of the first three Tempters. In what ways, if at all, have they been anticipated by the Three Priests? In what ways do they anticipate the speeches of the Three Knights?

3. Thomas expects the first three Tempters; he does not expect the fourth. What is the relation of the Fourth Tempter to Thomas? What is the effect of having the Fourth Tempter paraphrase Thomas's earlier speech, "We do not know very much of the future," etc.?

4. Why does the author end this part of the play by having the Three Priests and the Chorus *join* the Tempters in an appeal to Thomas?

5. What is the function of the Interlude? Does the sermon in which it consists break the dramatic pattern? Does it contribute to the dramatic pattern?

6. What is the function of the chorus spoken after the Knights have left for the first time? Has the poet adequately suggested the sense of ultimate confusion in which things seem to turn into their opposites and all fixed relations are dissolved? Why is it dramatically "right" that the Chorus should feel this at this time?

7. Thomas demands that the Priests unbar the door and admit the murderers. This decision keeps him from seeming merely passive in this crisis; yet the author must not make him seem to invite *his own death*—seizing upon martyrdom as a pure act of the will out of pride. Has the author succeeded in making Thomas an active protagonist and yet freed him from the charge that he has "sought" martyrdom? How?

8. In the course of the play Eliot at several points faces quite explicitly the matter of the meaning of the death of Thomas to a modern audience. The Fourth Tempter glances at what will happen to the memory of Thomas in future ages.

> . . . when men will not hate you
> Enough to defame or to execrate you,
> But pondering the qualities that you lacked
> Will only try to find the historical fact.

At the end of Part One, Thomas actually addresses the modern audience directly. But the most violent shift, out of the historical pattern of the events

portrayed into the present, occurs in the passage in which the Knights defend their action in modern [illegible]

us about the central intention of the play?

9. Are the passages which follow the Knights' defense—the speeches of the First and Third Priest and the final Chorus—"modern" or medieval? Do they succeed in conveying the sense of something "eternal"?

10. Is the function of the chorus substantially different from that in the plays by Euripides and Racine, or that in Aeschylus's *Oresteia?*

11. *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Everyman* may both be said to be Christian plays. *Everyman*, as we saw earlier, is much more than a sermon in dramatic form. What qualities in *Murder in the Cathedral* indicate that it is more than a tract?

12. Since this play is a poetic drama, we shall do well to attend carefully to the poetry, particularly to the poetry of the choruses. An obvious starting point in a study of this poetry is an examination of the imagery. For example, in the last chorus of Part I, animals dominate the imagery: "Puss-purr of leopard, footfall of padding bear," etc. But animal imagery dominates even more obviously the next chorus ("I have smelt them," etc.). Animals are mentioned once more in the final chorus, though here they are no longer exotic creatures like the leopard and the ape, but native like the wolf, hawk, and finch, and domestic, like the lamb. What governs the choice of these images? What are the varying effects? Why is the sense of smell so important in the earlier choruses and ignored in the final one? These questions should suggest others to the student, and he should not be satisfied until he feels that he understands the poetry of the play, not only for itself, but for the qualifications which it exerts on the total effect of the play.

HIPPOLYTUS *

By EURIPIDES

Since Euripides and Racine † are dealing with the same theme, a study of the differences between the two should amplify our understanding of dramatic method

1. In what way is Euripides' emphasis different from Racine's? How is the importance of Phaedra reduced and that of Hippolytus increased? Does Euripides make as much of Phaedra's inner conflict as does Racine?

2. Racine could hardly have given Hippolytus the central importance which he has here, for, as we saw, Racine's Hippolytus was largely a victim of circumstances How does Euripides keep Hippolytus from seeming a victim of circumstances? What part does his own character play in the fate which he meets? What is the "tragic flaw" in terms of which his fate becomes meaningful and therefore tragic rather than melodramatic? Consider, for instance, the description of himself in his last long speech:

* The *Hippolytus* of Euripides is available in the Woodhull translation in the Everyman Library edition, 1908, in the Arthur S. Way translation, Loeb Classical Library, New York and London, 1912; in the E. P Coleridge translation in *The Complete Greek Drama*, eds W J Oates and Eugene O'Neill, Jr., in the Gilbert Murray translation in *Fifteen Greek Plays*, ed Lane Cooper, New York, 1943

† Note This play should be studied in connection with Racine's *Phaedra*, the exercises below presuppose familiarity with the discussion of Racine's play. See pp 468–470 for a discussion of the *Phaedra*

I who devoutly worshipped
e gods, and all the human race excelled
chastity, . . .

What is the significance of the scene between Hippolytus and the palace officer early in the play? Of Hippolytus' last speech to the nurse about the middle of the play? Would it seem plausible to define Hippolytus' fundamental error as one of stress: overstressing one aspect of life, and underemphasizing a relationship of fundamental importance?

3. If we may assume some such conception to have underlain Euripides' handling of his materials, the next question is whether Euripides has successfully transmitted it to us in dramatic terms. He uses Venus as the agent or voice of the determining principle of action. How favorably does he present her? Does he admit, in his portrayal of her, elements which are likely to diminish our acceptance of her point of view? What is the effect of what is said about her by other characters in the play? Consider, in this connection, the treatment of Diana in the play. Does Euripides, on the other hand, adequately present that aspect of Hippolytus which must be used to justify his suffering? Or is Euripides inclined to portray him oversympathetically? Do you feel that any of the author's effects verge upon the sentimental?

4. In this connection it may be worth noting that in his play *The Frogs*, Aristophanes, the Greek writer of comedy, makes Aeschylus, a slightly older writer of tragedy, say of Euripides,

> Thou bastard of the earth,
> With thy patch'd robes and rags of sentiment
> Raked from the streets . . . .

Does the *Hippolytus* provide any justification of the charge? Compare the death of Hippolytus here with that in Racine's play. Does Euripides appear to be "holding" the scene? Does it remind you in any way of the death scenes in Lillo's *The London Merchant*?

5. If we now return to Phaedra, we can see that her part in the play is that of an instrument of divine intentions. In view of this fact, Euripides might have been satisfied to make her simply a fill-in character who performs the necessary function of falling in love with Hippolytus. But Euripides is not satisfied with this simple procedure; he prefers, instead, to proceed more complexly by developing Phaedra fully as a character. How does he do this?

6. We see in Euripides as in Racine a certain use of the imagery of light and dark. Which playwright makes more consistent use of such imagery?

7. How does Euripides secure suspense in the first scene between Phaedra and the nurse? Could the nurse be said to be "practical" in somewhat the same way that Falstaff is? If so, do we feel the same way about them? Why?

8. Does Phaedra's accusation of Hippolytus seem wholly consistent with the rest of Euripides's treatment of her? Might the accusation have come just as well from the nurse? Compare Racine's treatment of this matter.

9. Does Euripides, the classical dramatist, observe the "rule" of stage decorum as carefully as Racine, the neoclassical dramatist? What conclusion about the "rule" might this fact suggest?

10. The opening speech of Venus ex-emplifies the expository prologue whi- is often used in classical plays, especia- those of Euripides. Does this convent- seem to interfere seriously with "suspense"? To destroy our interes- what follows? Why?

11. Compare the treatment of love in this play with that in I- *The London Merchant*—the analy- character, the consequences, the r- tion. Which author deals with hi- tion in the more complex and way?

THE SILVER CORD*

By SIDNEY HOWARD

1. Howard's exposition is accomplished very succinctly: we are speedily introduced to the leading characters, the more important aspects of their backgrounds are sketched in, and their dominant characteristics, which will lead to the conflict of the play, are made clear. Is the exposition managed plausibly as well as speedily? At what point does the exposition end, would you say, and the forward movement begin?

2. Hester is obviously a foil for Christina, Robert for David. This obvious use of foils is extremely helpful in providing variety within the small cast. On the other hand, is the pairing off of characters too neat? Does it oversimplify the minor characters?

3. Is Mrs. Phelps plausible? Her obsession with her children—her possessiveness, her jealousy of her sons' sweethearts and wives—is doubtless found in some women. But is the degree to which such emotions dominate Mrs. Phelps plausible? Has the author heightened these traits too much in his anxiety to make his point? Has he turned Mrs. Phelps into a monster? Consider, for example, her calling to her sons to get their sweaters as they rush to rescue Hester from drowning

4. What is the basic struggle in the play? How are the special aspects of it defined? Consider Hester's struggle with Mrs. Phelps, Robert's struggle with her, David's struggle with her, Christina's struggle with her. Is *struggle* too emphatic a word for some of these cases?

* This play is available in *Contemporary Drama: Nine Plays*, eds. E. B. Watson and B. Pressey, New York, 1931 ff.; *Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners*, ed. M. J Moses, Boston, 1931 ff.; *Modern American and British Plays*, ed. S. M. Tucker, New York, 1933, *Representative Modern Dramas*, ed. C. H. Whitman, New York, 1936

5. In the overt conflict between Christina and Mrs. Phelps at the end of the play, does the author take some pains to see that Mrs. Phelps's side is presented? Why? May Christina's analysis of the situation be taken to be the author's own? How far may Christina be said to be the author's mouthpiece?

6. Are the sons in the play too weak? Waiving the case of Robert, one can see that even David, at the end of the play, is being fought over by two women while he himself is relatively passive in the struggle. What does this fact suggest about the emphasis intended in the play?

7. A psychological explanation for the mother's attitude toward her sons and of the sons' attitude toward their mother is suggested throughout the play and is given specific statement in the final speeches of Christina. Yet, how far is the psychological account incorporated in the play itself, that is, dramatized? As the play stands, some readers will feel that the author is primarily interested, not in *how the situation came about*—in the crucial choices which Mrs. Phelps made, in the decisions which she came to which committed her and her sons to their emotional imbroglio—but rather *in the ways out of the situation* in which they have all become involved. In other words, the play is not primarily interested in dealing dramatically with cause and effect but with effect and remedy. (This may suggest to you a comparison with *Lady Windermere's Fan*, in parts of which Wilde seemed to become more interested in *rescuing* Lady Windermere than in *studying* her.) What effect does such a method—if this is Howard's method—have upon the tone of a play? Does it look toward tragedy or comedy? Toward melodrama?

8. In what senses is *The Silver Cord* a

"problem play"? What would be its interest as a play in a civilization in which the problem did not exist? What would be its interest in a civilization in which the problem has been eliminated? Is it intended to direct people's attention to the problem? Does it suggest remedies? Can you defend the play against the charge that it is primarily a tract—an essay calling attention to the evils of a social problem with a view to its elimination? Consider whether the author transcends the issues of the immediate problem and thus opens a wider area of meaningfulness.

9. What is "the silver cord"?

THE KING THE GREATEST ALCALDE *

By LOPE DE VEGA

In the last speech of the play Sancho refers to *The King the Greatest Alcalde* as a "comedy." A critic points out, however, that Lope developed the *comedia* as a form which combined numerous elements ranging from tragedy to farce. Perhaps, then, instead of merely treating the play as a kind of comedy, we should examine the various elements which compose it and see what kinds of effect they produce.

1. The class-dispute which appears in the central action suggests the problem play, although other elements fall outside the problem—some of the actions of Pelayo and Nuno, and the love affair itself, which, instead of being taken for granted as a starting-point, is presented with great gayety and vivacity. But insofar as aristocratic injustice is the central issue, the question that arises is this: Does the problem "date" the play? I.e., is it no longer of interest because of the disappearance of the feudalism from which it stems? Or does Lope give his materials more than historical significance? Does he generalize, as it were, the problem of injustice? Does he go beyond social problems into problems of character? Consider especially the treatment of Don Tello.

* This play, as translated by John G. Underhill, may be found in *Four Plays by Lope de Vega*, New York, 1936, and in *World Drama*, ed. Barrett Clark, New York, 1933.

2. Again, some elements suggest melodrama—the external conflict, the abduction and imprisonment, flight and pursuit, rape, the *deus ex machina*, punishment of the "villain." But is Lope willing to stop at the "thriller" stage? Let us consider some of the following points:

a. Is the king altogether a *deus ex machina?* He is an all-powerful outside force, but is his final action unprepared for? Is he really an outside force, or does Lope consider him an integral part of the play? Does he have any symbolic value? Why is so much pressure put upon him in the final scene?

b. There is a "happy ending," which is certainly too easy and ready-made. Yet in another sense the king's rescue comes too late. Does this not show Lope in part willing to let his materials *take their logical course* instead of merely managing a melodramatic escape?

c. Is Don Tello merely a "straight" villain, or does Lope try to make him a plausible, developed character? Note how he is presented at the beginning and at the end. Note, most of all, how he behaves after abducting Elvira. Are not his continual efforts to rationalize his act subtle signs of an inner disturbance? Might we say, perhaps, that Lope is taking a character who is not wholly bad and investigating the effect upon him of circumstances which bring out certain evil tendencies?

d. The treatment of Feliciana is especially important, for Lope might have treated her sentimentally in either of two ways—as the hateful lady who aids her brother's villainy, or as the kind woman who repudiates her brother completely. How does Lope avoid both of these extremes? What is the effect of his method?

e. Pelayo might be considered the farcical element that is often found in melodrama (cf. Morton's *Speed the Plough*). But is he merely the comically stupid oaf? Or does he have some resemblance to the *fool* of Elizabethan drama, who is capable of sharp insights into the way of the world? Consider, for instance, the lines (in the scene with Don Tello in Act I) in which he repeats Sancho's lines "hind-end first." Again, is Pelayo's constant talk about pigs only an end in itself, or does it suggest other meanings? Does the motif of "piggishness" occur elsewhere in the play? Do Pelayo's lines ever serve to qualify the tone? Consider the farewell scene (early in Act II) as Sancho and Pelayo leave to call upon the king. Finally, does the use of Pelayo help give a more complex picture of peasant life?

f. Is Sancho merely the honest rustic of melodrama, or is he made an interesting individual? Note, for instance, his appeal to Don Tello early in Act II; rather than a simple demand, it is imaginative, subtle, skillful. What interesting use of symbolic language does it contain?

g. Is Elvira, likewise, merely a pathetic victim, or is she made interesting in her own right?

3. Such points suggest that the play must be considered more than a melodrama. Does it, however, become a tragedy? Can we properly regard Sancho and Elvira as tragic characters, or are they simply victims? Aside from the happy ending, would their situation lead to tragedy or pathos? Do they have a "tragic flaw"? Or any quality that Lope might have developed as a tragic flaw? (Cf. the pride of Hippolytus in Euripides' play.)

On the other hand, might Don Tello be the tragic protagonist? He is not wholly evil; we see his evil conduct, indeed, as a kind of "tragic flaw" after we have seen him in another light (note that he has a certain relationship to Macbeth and to Phaedra). But is the play so focused as to make it Don Tello's tragedy? Is our attention primarily upon him?

4. After study of such points the reader will conclude, perhaps, that if the play falls short of tragedy, it at least improves upon melodrama and avoids some of the pitfalls of the problem play. And there are other qualities which suggest that Lope, if in parts he is commonplace, is in some ways reaching a moderately high literary level.

a. What is the effect of the wit which appears in different parts of the play? Note the various examples of wordplay. Does the tone ever suggest that of Congreve?

b. Observe the irony that pervades the play. Don Tello's part has an entirely ironic origin; the student should trace all the details that contribute to the ironic effect. The well-intending Nuno has an inclination toward obvious conclusions which often leads to ironic effect: note his original attitude to Tello, his attitude to Elvira after her detention, his view of the visiting Alcalde's success. Trace the irony throughout the play.

c. Finally, there is some excellent poetry in the play: note the imagery in Sancho's speech to Don Tello in Act II, already mentioned; in Sancho's speech to Tello beginning "Great my Lord, the years pass by" in Act I (note how what he says here about the morning is picked up later in the Act, when he several times refers to the dawn). The student should give especial attention to the animal imagery in Don Tello's first long speech in Act I and in Sancho's last

eech in the same act and again Tello's speech beginning "No, woman" in Act II; and to San- speech beginning "Wrongs are ildren" in Act II.

eral images or terms recur ghout the play in a way that sug- something more than coincidence. e the various references to the sun, Elvira's hair, and to swords and see ether they in any way suggest or lect the changes of situation which nstitute the play. But most of all race the references to flowers and blos- soms, which appear in Sancho's first speech and in Elvira's last speech in the play, as well as to trees and plants. These appear clearly to be not decora- tive but a means of suggesting a certain *natural* order of things and of pointing up a violation of that order. See to what extent you can relate the passages to the whole meaning of the play.

OTHER QUESTIONS

5. How successfully are exposition and foreshadowing managed?

6. Why are Don Tello and Feliciana made to talk about marriage in the first scene in which they appear?

7. Why does Lope have Don Tello develop a passion for Elvira very rapidly instead of tracing a gradual develop- ment? Does this show how he intends to handle and stress his materials?

8. Is Lope on the right track in hav- ing Don Tello constantly looking for reasons to be angry at Sancho?

9. Compare the treatment of the political problem in this play with that in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*. Are the authors' points of view the same? Is one more mature than the other? Is the Pelayo comedy as integral to the play as the Falstaff comedy is to its play?

THE CIRCLE *

By SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Because it deals with the same basic situation—that of a woman who is de- ciding whether to leave her husband for another man—Maugham's play invites comparison with Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. But the comparison immediately leads to the perception of differences, and the tracing of these differences is very useful: it shows us how two treatments of a situation may become quite different because the authors have *different attitudes to the material*.

First we see that Maugham and Wilde conceive of the problem quite differently. Lady Windermere is in love with her husband; Elizabeth is not. How does this alter the moral situation? Is Eliza- beth's eloping a different matter from Lady Windermere's? Could you justify the point that it would be less moral to remain with her husband than to leave him? What difference, also, is brought about by the fact that Lady Winder- mere has a child, whereas Elizabeth does not? Is the difference between Lord Windermere and Arnold of any signifi- cance here?

But both authors are writing comed and are therefore not primarily co cerned with moral issues at all. We a invited to consider, not whether La Windermere and Elizabeth are do *the wrong thing*, but whether they *doing the expedient thing*: (1) How they make out against a hostile soc (2) What will be the effect on th

* This play is available in Montrose J. Moses, *Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners*, 1931; S. M. Tucker, *Twenty-Five Modern Plays*, 1931; *My Best Play*, London, 1934; E. B. Watson and B. Pressey, *Contemporary Drama: Nine Plays*, New York, 1931 ff.

the special kind of life which they will have to lead? The issue is *really* a psychological one.

The dramatists are alike in their focusing of these questions: each protagonist must make her answer by the aid of an object lesson provided by the preceding generation. Lady W. not only decides to stay with her husband but also gains a broader understanding of character: this is the crux of the play. But Elizabeth decides to leave—even after seeing, in Lady Kitty, a product of unconventional life who is considerably inferior to Mrs Erlynne in ma- [illegible]

One *might* describe Maugham as a romantic, one who believes in the primacy of love, whatever the circumstances and results. Does he, however, take steps to keep the Teddie-Elizabeth affair from seeming merely a romantic idyl? Is there anything "realistic" in the relationship? Are we meant to feel that, despite their enthusiasm and *certain "poetic" lines, they have their feet* [illegible] romantic one?

The answer to this last question may suggest that Maugham's attitude is essentially ironic rather than romantic. If this is true, we must then determine whether it is bitterly ironic or whether it is the irony of a detached, amused, but nevertheless sympathetic observer. To consider the first option: is Maugham, in terms of the play, merely stating that people are always emotional fools who will never use sense or learn by experience? By a certain reading of the evidence we might make this reading fit almost every character in the play. But is it not too narrow? Is there not something to be said for the decision which [illegible]

Is there any intimation that, had the *latter pair lived conventional lives, they* might perhaps have fallen far short of the bright hopes which in periods of recrimination they still recall?

Is it possible, then, that once again we have something like the mature comedy of *Henry IV, Part I*—comedy which views experience in perspective and finds that "there is much to be said on [illegible] cause his situation is less inevitable, still he does touch on the broad subject of the usefulness of others' experience as a guide to action.) What does Maugham do to suggest that Kitty and Porteous, however lacking in charm and dignity they are at their worst, perhaps did not make the worst possible choice? Champion-Cheney is a delightful cynic: but how does Maugham show that he does not have a totally effective key to a wise and serene life? There is, of course, his miscalculation as to how things will work out. But note, additionally, the *implications* of his speech in [illegible] fifth birthday I give them a diamond ring and tell them they must no longer waste their youth and beauty on an old fogey like me." Does this not suggest, perhaps, a certain immaturity, comparable to that of Kitty and Porteous at their least restrained? Is it possible that he has never grown up to something which they have experienced?

Again, as the deserted husband, Arnold would naturally claim our sympathy, but by what means does Maugham—from the start—indicate that a man must be more than a legal husband if he is to be a satisfactory mate whom we can admire? Finally, we are by no means sure that the *young* lovers are, under the stress of their emotion, making a bad choice. *As a matter of fact, their romantic passion is pre-*

sented favorably. But note that, finally, Maugham does not commit himself as to how things will go with them. How does he show that, for better or worse, their future lies with them? What, in the last analysis, does Maugham "believe" in?

Do we not here once again have the essence of the comic situation: that there are no perfect choices? But Maugham views this fact with a sympathetic, not a disillusioned irony: by making Teddie and Elizabeth disavow expectations of a perfect future, he gives them the best start he can in their gamble against the conventions.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the importance of Teddie's speech in Act III which begins, "But I wasn't offering you happiness," in determining the tone of the play? Does this make the tone more or less "romantic"?

2. Would you agree that Maugham maintains a more consistently comic tone than Wilde? If so, can it still be argued that the choice faced by Elizabeth is a more "real" one than that faced by Lady Windermere?

3. Do you find any witty aphorisms which resemble those in Wilde's play?

4. Does Maugham use any devices which suggest the technique of the "well-made" play as employed by Wilde? Do any of his devices for giving characters information or for getting them moved about have the air of artificiality which characterizes some of Wilde's methods?

5. Does Maugham in any way suggest parallels between the younger and older pair of lovers—parallels which indicate that the younger *may* come to resemble the older? Consider, for instance, Teddie's manner of speaking to Elizabeth.

6. Could Maugham's play be considered, like Congreve's, a pattern of variations upon the theme of love? What variations are there? What is the relationship of the other variants to Teddie and Elizabeth? Does their problem in any way resemble that of Mirabell and Millamant?

7. Maugham has developed his third act almost entirely by means of irony. Find the various instances of it. Note especially the contrast between Arnold and Teddie. Arnold almost wins Elizabeth back by his gentle considerateness. What winning quality of Teddie's is contrasted with this?

8. How is the choice of the lovers affected by the fact that it is always a "career" or a "place in society" which is presented as the alternative. Does this kind of alternative make the romantic impulse seem more or less trustworthy?

9. How does Maugham's observance of the unities compare with Wilde's?

10. Though much is said about Arnold's career, we never take it very seriously. Why?

11. Compare Arnold's gamble in Act III with Mirabell's gamble in Act V. Is it logical, in view of the total situations, that one should succeed and the other fail?

12. How successfully is the exposition managed in Act I? Note especially the dialogue between Elizabeth and Arnold. Before the avowal between Elizabeth and Teddie, what suggestions are given us that the relationship between them is not wholly casual? Maugham has managed this rather skillfully, and his methods are worth some attention.

13. What provides the sense of progression in Act I? Note how the act gradually builds towards its climax.

14. Does Arnold's antique chair have any symbolic value? Is Kitty's mistake about "Sheraton" a mere comic malapropism, or does the mention of *The School for Scandal* have ironic overtones?

15. Does Maugham have Champion-Cheney return at the end of Act I just for the shock? Or is the return plausible in terms of Champion-Cheney's character?

16. What is the function of false teeth throughout the play?

17. Do we find as many varieties of comedy as we found in Congreve? Is there any farce? Does Maugham ever permit a too trivial tone?

18. What is shown by Elizabeth's annoyance at her father-in-law for his attitude to Kitty and Porteous? (Act II).

19. In Wilde's play we saw that the structure of several acts was determined partly by the use of contrasting panels of action. Is there any suggestion of the same scheme here? Especially within Acts II and III you may find evidence of balanced or contrasting scenes Does the use of such scenes help give perspective?

20. Compare the Elizabeth-Kitty interview in Act III with the comparable scene between Lady Windermere and Mrs. Erlynne. What is the difference in tone? Which scene verges more toward melodrama? Why? What does Maugham do to keep Kitty's character consistent and balanced during this scene?

SPEED THE PLOUGH (1800) *

By THOMAS MORTON

Speed the Plough combines farce and melodrama (hence it may conveniently be studied in connection with such plays as *The Twin Menaechmi* and *George Barnwell*); it tries for a variety of effects in a way often found in popular entertainments—for instance, the movies. In fact, it is as if it had been worked over by a "gag-man" who had schemes to meet every taste Therefore it shows us what happens when the author is trying to please everybody.

1. How good is the focus of the play? Is the reader's attention upon one central action, or divided among a multitude of activities? How many plots or themes can you find in the play? Is the complexity of the play like that of Congreve's *Way of the World*? Or does it rather suggest a three-ring circus?

2. In this play we see enormous quantities of action—even more than in *The Twin Menaechmi*. Does much of the action appear to be meaningful? What is the effect of such matters as the mortgage, the ploughing match, castle mysteries, an explosion and fire? Could Morton have used any of the given materials in such a way as to produce a mature and serious drama? Might he, for instance, have used the theme of the influence of past upon present, as Ibsen did in *Ghosts* and, in a sense, Shakespeare in *Hamlet*? What opportunity does he have for psychological studies? Might he have presented variations upon the theme of the relationship between the sexes, as Congreve does in *The Way of the World*? It is even possible that Morton thought he was doing some of these things. Why, then, does his way of doing things produce an effect of vast triviality?

3 Is Morton's characterization very thorough? What characters seem to be only conventional types? Analyze the effect of superficiality produced by the treatment of Susan and Bob Handy in Act V i Is the character of Bob Handy consistent throughout the play? Could you defend the argument that Morton's fondness for *matters of fact* (the "whodunit" style) leads him away from real problems of character? Compare him, in this respect, with Wilde.

* This play may be found in *Lesser English Comedies of the Eighteenth Century*, The World's Classics Series, Oxford, 1927, and in *English Plays 1660–1820*, ed A E Morgan, New York and London, 1935 It also appeared in a 19th-century edition and in Mrs Inchbald's *British Theatre*, Vol 25

4. In what instances does Morton's desire for a happy denouement lead him to use a *deus ex machina*—that is, to refuse to deal seriously with the implications of a situation? In the satire on science we can see one motif that simply drops out of sight. Are there others? How about the satire on matrimony?

5. To what extent do other kinds of comedy than farce appear in the play? Note the satirical tendencies and see how fully they are carried out. Is there any comedy of character? Consider, in this connection, Dame Ashfield's attitude to Mrs. Grundy (who, by the way, was first heard of in this play). There is some influence, also, of the "comedy of humors"—a type dependent upon a character's possession of a special "humor" or dominant characteristic. The danger of the form is that characters may become freaks. Does Morton escape the danger?

6. After a comic start, Morton first asks us to take things seriously in Act I. iii. How are we affected by the "Grove," a character "wrapt in a great coat," whistles as signals, cryptic remarks? Why do such details fail to suggest fundamental seriousness? What of Henry's gestures and style of speech? Does his language ever remind you of the sort of thing Sheridan was satirizing in *The School for Scandal?* Is the serious language of the play ever marked by clichés? Study the language of Scenes i and ii in Act III.

7. What is the effect of the introduction of patriotic speeches in Act III. ii and elsewhere? Aristotle says that each kind of art should have the kind of effect appropriate to it. Is patriotism fitting here, or must we conclude that Morton is simply trying to drag in every effect he can? Is such an author sure of himself?

8. Is there a perceptible relationship between serious and comic effects, as in *Henry IV* or *Lady Windermere's Fan* or even *The King the Greatest Alcalde?* How does Morton's treatment of interclass relationships compare with Lope de Vega's?

PHAEDRA *

By JEAN RACINE

Racine's *Phaedra* (1677), which we have already compared to Euripides' *Hippolytus*, also poses certain problems like those of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, and thus we may get at the essential qualities of the play by considering the general similarities with Ibsen's play.

1. First the question comes up: whose tragedy is it? Although Phaedra is the title character, Hippolytus receives almost as much of our attention as she does, and he is certainly treated very sympathetically. But is he more than a good character who meets an unhappy fate? Is he, so to speak, a victim of circumstances? Is there, in him, even as much conflict as we saw in Rosmer? Do we see him really struggle, or make vital decisions on which future developments hinge? Do we not, in his situation, find *pathos* rather than a genuinely tragic effect?

It seems clear, in fact, that Racine has played down one aspect of the story which might have brought Hippolytus into tragic pre-eminence—his love for Aricia. In what serious conflict might this have involved Hippolytus? (Com-

* The English translation by Robert Boswell is available in *The Chief European Dramatists*, ed. Brander Matthews, Boston, 1916, and in *Types of World Tragedy* (*World Drama Series*), ed. Robert M. Smith, New York, 1928; Robert Henderson's translation is in *A Treasury of the Theatre*, eds. Burns Mantle and John Gassner, New York, 1935.

pare *Romeo and Juliet*, or, in a somewhat different way, the *Antigone* of Sophocles.) Notice, however, that Theseus does not even believe that Hippolytus really loves Aricia. What effect is secured by the incredulity of Theseus?

As for the death of Hippolytus—is it used primarily for its effect on us, or for its effects on other characters in the play? What are those effects? Does Hippolytus's death really have as much significance as Rosmer's? Why does Aricia have only a small part at the end?

2. Like Ibsen's Rebecca, then, Phaedra is the tragic protagonist—but Racine is clear about his objective from the start. Beginning with Act I, our attention is centered on Phaedra's problem. Despite the large parts assigned other characters, the focusing is well managed (compare, in this respect, *The London Merchant*). What is Phaedra's conflict? How does Racine endeavor to keep our sympathy for her? How does he show us that she is struggling? Although her passion for Hippolytus is unique, do we feel that hers is merely a "case history"? Or is she universalized? If so, how? May her passion for Hippolytus be regarded as symbolic of a kind of general human experience? Is this similarly true of her willingness to have him wrongly accused? How are we made to feel that her remorse is real? What does she not do that would wholly alienate our sympathy?

3. As we have seen, Ibsen was interested, at least at the start of his play, in certain social problems. Does Racine manifest any similar interest? Does he take the matter of the succession to Theseus's throne, even while it still appears to be a real problem, very seriously? Would it be correct to say that the political problem merely provides a way of analyzing the characters further? If so, would this indicate that Racine is *further* away from, or closer to, tragic effects?

4. The materials with which Ibsen works include, very importantly, the characters' "sense of the past," the influence of tradition. Is such an influence also at work in Racine's play? In this connection, study carefully all that is said about the ancestry of Theseus, Phaedra, and Aricia. How do these characters regard such facts? As mere family history? As something to escape from? As a "fate" which is part of their heritage and with which they must deal? Are they merely passive? Do they gain or lose dignity because of their attitude to what has gone before? (We recall that George Barnwell is inclined to talk about what he is "fated" to do. Perhaps the lack of impressiveness of what he says may be illuminated by contrasting his situation with that of Racine's characters.)

5. Whereas in Ibsen we discerned a tendency to conform to the "unities," we see in Racine a dramatist who observed the unities on principle; in fact, his play is a good example of the neoclassical "rules" tragedy which was the ideal of European dramatists for a century or more. In a larger sense, the play illustrates the tendency of all drama to deal simply with the crisis of a situation. What important events, for instance, have taken place before the opening of the play? (Compare Lillo, who tries to record a whole situation, from beginning to end, in *The London Merchant*.) Does the observance of the unities make the play seem cramped? Or is it possible that Racine, by a certain vagueness as to time and place, makes us tend to lose consciousness of such matters?

6. One of the neo-classical "rules" was that of stage decorum, in accordance with which violent deaths or other acts of violence never occurred on the stage but were reported by other characters. Hence some critics call this play "declamatory," as if the play consisted merely of formal speeches *about* events. Is this a sound judgment? Does the

play seem undramatic? Or does the dialogue generate a definite tension of its own? To what extent do we see actual conflicts within and between characters? Would the play necessarily be improved by our seeing directly some of the reported death scenes?

7. We have seen that many of Ibsen's effects depend upon irony. Is this also true of Racine's? Make a careful study of the play to discover the extent of his use of ironic effects. It is well to recall, in this connection, that Racine was modeling his play upon Greek tragedy, which often relied heavily upon irony.

8. In Shakespeare we have seen certain suggestions made, or certain concepts stressed, by the repetition of, or by variations played upon, certain images and figures. It is highly possible that Racine is using such devices to amplify the meaning of his play. Note that, upon her first appearance in Act I, Phaedra says a farewell to the sun; and that, at the end of Act V, she speaks of "Death, from mine eyes veiling the light of heav'n." Returning to Act I, we find that, after Oenone and Phaedra have both spoken of Phaedra's seeking the "light," Phaedra wishes for "the forest's shade"—associated, for her, with Hippolytus. Trace the imagery of light and darkness throughout the play and see whether the contrast seems to support and amplify the general intention of the play. Note, in this connection, the reference to the "torch of life" and the "flames of love." Do you find any paradox here?

9. Racine's technical craftsmanship has been very much admired. How well does he prepare for future events? Find all the passages which prepare us, in one way or another, for the reported death of Theseus, for the return of Theseus, and especially for the death of Hippolytus. Note how all the references to Hippolytus's chariot or "car" are introduced. How well is the exposition managed in Acts I and II?

10. Several of the acts seem to be constructed by means of parallel scenes. In Act I, for instance, what similarities are there between the Hippolytus-Theramenes scene and the Phaedra-Oenone scene? What ironic differences? In Act II, what is the relationship between the Hippolytus-Aricia scene and the Hippolytus-Phaedra scene? What ironic resemblance is there between Phaedra's attitude to Hippolytus and Aricia's?

11. Phaedra's confidante Oenone is an interesting character. At one level she is merely the faithful servitor who becomes the ironic victim of Phaedra's ingratitude. In what sense, however, may she be said to deserve her fate? Is she in any way a symbolic character? Does she represent a part of Phaedra herself? Is her rationalism in any way like that of Ibsen's Rebecca? Does she resemble Lady Macbeth?

12. What ironic use is made of the familiar motif of the hostile stepmother?

13. To what extent does pride become an auxiliary motif in the play? Is pride ever treated ironically?

14. How is the fact that Theseus and Hippolytus are father and son reflected in the workings of Phaedra's mind?

15. What symbolic use is made of Hippolytus's sword in Acts II, III, and IV? Is the technique in any way reminiscent of Wilde's in his use of Lady Windermere's fan?

16. How is Phaedra's attitude to Hippolytus complicated by various events?

17. Dryden complains that Racine has transformed his original Greek character, a vigorous out-of-doors young man, into "Monsieur Hippolyte." Is the charge justified? Does anything in Act IV suggest that Aricia might be called "Mlle. Arice"?

18. Consult question 11 on Euripides' *Hippolytus*, and then work out a complete study of the treatment of illicit love by Racine, Euripides, and Lillo. Note, further, the variations of the theme which are found in Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*.

STREET SCENE *

By ELMER RICE

1. Has the author successfully distinguished among his large number of characters? In answering this question, consider the use made of (1) uniforms—of the letter-carrier, the ambulance-men—and of (2) dialect—of the Swede, the Italian, etc. Why has the author used so many *dramatis personæ?*

2. How is the exposition managed—of the situation of the Maurrant family, the particular problem in which the family is now involved, the conflict which must soon be brought to a head?

3. Is the action confused? Assuming that the basic line of action is that of the fortunes of the Maurrant family, do the concerns of the other characters obscure this line? How would you justify the statement that these subsidiary happenings actually bear upon the main line of the action?

4. The first act may seem to present no more than a "slice of life"—the welter of experience presented higgledy-piggledy, with a certain convincing realism, yet without any clear pattern or meaning. Is this, however, a fair account of the matter? Does a forward movement appear before the act ends? What is it?

5. What is the author's attitude toward Mrs. Maurrant? Toward Frank Maurrant? Does he see them endowed with moral responsibility, or, primarily, as victims of environment?

6 Why, in the second act, does the author insist upon the helplessness of Rose? What is he doing besides foreshadowing later events? Is he helping bring out the theme of his play here?

7. Sam Kaplan's family situation seems to differ radically from that of Rose, but what do the two situations have in common? How, again, does this fact support the theme of the play?

8 What do we learn about the intentions of the play from the fact that the shooting of Mrs Maurrant occurs in the *second* act, not the third? "Whose play" is it? What is the function of the third act?

9. Is Rose a *tragic* character? Is she victim or protagonist? What measure of free will is accorded to her by the dramatist? What measure of moral responsibility? Is she placed in the play to *determine*—or at least to attempt to determine—events, or simply to feel and respond to events?

10 Does Rose make a good central [illegible] characters are tied in with hers?

11. Does the dramatist have any "solution" for the problems which he poses? Should he have any? In what sense, if any, is *Street Scene* to be regarded as a "problem play"?

12. In considering an answer to question 11, notice that the author has a number of characters express through the play their own "philosophies of life." Do any of these speeches serve to represent the author's own views? Do any of them obviously reflect views with which you would regard him as unsympathetic? How is his lack of sympathy indicated dramatically?

13 Notice how many "walk-on" characters there are—characters who simply walk across the scene and say a few words which have little or nothing to do with the action. Granted that some

* *This play was published separately,* New York, 1929, it is also available in *Contemporary Drama: Nine Plays,* eds E. B. [illegible] New York. 1931 ff; [illegible]

of them have been chosen merely for the sake of variety or realism, are there some who contribute symbolic effects to the play?

14. In Act III, why is the discovery of the chicken which Mrs. Maurrant has been cooking effective? Does it make an ironic commentary on the events that have occurred during the morning? What is that commentary?

15. Why has the author chosen the little episode which he uses for the ending of the play? It, too, makes an ironic comment on the whole action that has occurred. What is the meaning of that comment?

16. Is *Street Scene* better focused, or less well focused, than *Rosmersholm?*

17. In which play (*Street Scene* or *Rosmersholm*) do the forces that move the characters come largely from within the characters? From the environment? Which, therefore, appears to give a more profound version of human character? Which comes closer to tragedy?

18. When *Street Scene* was first produced, its setting was considered to be very original; it was indeed strikingly different from the realistic interiors which had long been the vogue in American drama. Does this setting, however, in any way resemble that of Plautus's play? Are the settings used in a comparable fashion?

CYRANO DE BERGERAC *

By EDMOND ROSTAND

In this essentially romantic play, Cyrano has the attractiveness of the brave man who lives for honor and yet who possesses a sense of humor, of the man who has a poet's sensitiveness but a sensitiveness which he must conceal behind an exterior of bravado. Moreover, he has the final attractiveness of the hero who is not perfect, and who is conscious of his defect. He has an overlarge nose, but he does not protect himself by slinking into obscurity; he brazens out the situation. His reaction to Valvert's insult is typical: Cyrano beats him in the duel but at the same time shows Valvert how much more stinging and original insults might have been made.

* This play was published in the Brian Hooker translation, in New York, 1923; in the *Plays*, translated by Henderson Norman, New York, 1921; in the Howard Kingsbury translation in *A Treasury of the Theatre*, ed. Burns Mantle, New York, 1935; in the Gertrude Hall translation in *Chief Contemporary Dramatists*, Second Series, ed. T. H. Dickinson, Boston, 1921; *Modern Continental Plays*, ed. S. M. Tucker, New York, 1929; *Twenty-Five Modern Plays*, ed. S. M. Tucker, New York, 1931; *Contemporary Drama: Nine Plays*, eds. E. B. Watson and B. Pressey, New York, 1931 ff.; *Representative Modern Dramas*, ed. C. H. Whitman, New York, 1936.

1. What has the author done to prevent Cyrano's action in Act I from seeming that of a bully? How do the following serve to counteract such an impression: the duel with Valvert? Cyrano's confession to Le Bret (at the end of the act) of his true reason for hustling the player off the stage?

2. How does Ragueneau, the poetical baker, serve as a foil for Cyrano? In what respects does he present a parallel?

3. What is the tone of the first two acts? Is it plainly comic? But what, more precisely, is the nature of the comedy? Does it have an element of fantasy, a kind of spirit of make-believe which keeps us from measuring the characters and actors against the world of reality?

4. How heavily does Rostand rely on the fantastic in the scene under Roxane's balcony in Act III? Even

assuming that Cyrano would generously help Christian win the woman he himself loves, is the scene very probable? Would not Cyrano have to have rather marked gifts as a ventriloquist for Roxane to be deceived? Would not Roxane have to be rather undiscerning not to suspect that something was wrong? Do we, by the way, ever learn anything about Roxane except that she has a pretty face and appreciates an eloquent and handsome lover?

5. If we are willing to accept improbabilities because of the general tone of fantasy and because the author is obviously being playful, what about the scene in which Cyrano renounces Roxane forever in Act IV? (After Roxane has said that she would love her husband even if he were disfigured, even if he were grotesquely ugly, because of his soul, and after Cyrano has begun to hope, Le Bret whispers to him that Christian has just been killed.) Do the melodramatic turns and improbable situations stand up when the issues (as here) become serious and we are required to take them seriously?

6. At the end of Act IV Rostand gives the following stage directions for Cyrano's last speech: "Declaiming [illegible]

attitude toward realism and toward his play in general?

7. Is the ending of the play sentimental? What is the attitude which the author wants us to take toward Cyrano's final heroics? Are his last speeches sufficiently salted with wit? Or do some of them become self-regarding and ludicrous if we refuse to take them sentimentally? For example, why is "I believe she is looking at me . . . that she dares to look at my nose, the bony baggage who has none" successful, whereas "Ah, you are there too, you bloated and pompous Silliness! I know full well that you will lay me low at last. . . . No matter: whilst I have breath, I will fight you, I will fight you, I will fight you" is emptily theatrical? Could it be fairly said that Cyrano actually falls a victim to silliness here? That his wit and capacity for self-irony which make him delightful in the first act desert him here?

8. Taking the play as a whole, in what scenes is Cyrano most plausible? Least plausible? In what scenes is he most attractive? Least attractive?

9. What is the quality of his love for Roxane? Is it based on any meeting of minds, on any comprehension of her personality? (Does Roxane, by the way, have a personality?) Or is Cyrano's love for her the love for something completely remote and unreal?

10. What is the total intention of the play? Is it successfully realized? Taking the previous questions into account, write a full analysis of the play. How much must your judgment of the play be influenced by the changes of tone implied by questions 3, 5, and 7? Do the changes in tone suggest uncertainty in the author's intention?

11. The balcony scene, as well as other aspects of this play, is somewhat suggestive of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. How far do the similarities go? What are the fundamental differences? Is Shakespeare's play "romantic" in the same way that Rostand's is?

12. To what extent might Cyrano be compared with Falstaff (they both have physically grotesque characteristics that are laughed at, both have a sense of humor, etc.)? What is the difference between the attitudes of the respective authors toward these characters? Which author views his character more objectively? Sees him more complexly?

13. Compare the treatment of love in Rostand's play with that in Congreve's *Way of the World*, in which love is also a central theme.

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY *

The Second Shepherds' Play (a late medieval drama) presents some useful points of comparison with Plautus's *Menaechmi*, since it also belongs to the category of farce. As a matter of fact, the English play in some ways seems even more primitive than the Latin one.

1. Does *The Second Shepherds' Play*, however, depend primarily upon coincidence or upon character? To what extent can you trace the central events to the character of the shepherds? Of Mak? Of Mak's wife?

2. In one sense the three shepherds might be said to function as one character. Does the author, however, try to differentiate them? Examine their lines in the opening scene and, more importantly, in the scene in which they visit Mak.

3. How good a technician is the author? Does he generally prepare us for what is going to happen later in the play? What early evidence is there of Mak's cleverness? Of his acting ability? Why are we not surprised by his thievery? By the mode of concealment of the stolen lamb?

4. Is there any irony in the play? Consider especially the discovery scene.

5. Is there any real wit in the scene preceding the discovery? Are there any puns?

6. The play as a whole shows how secular material was replacing Biblical material at this late period in the development of the so-called Miracle Plays. Does the author, in adding his original comic story, in any way connect it with the Biblical story? Some of the characters, of course, are the same, but, beyond that, is there what might be called a comic version of the serious theme?

* *The Second Shepherds' Play* may be found in the Riverside Literature Series, ed. C. G. Child, Boston, 1910; in *The Story of the Drama*, ed. Joseph R. Taylor, Boston, 1930, Vol. 2; *British Prose and Poetry*, eds. Lieder, Lovett, and Root, Boston, 1938, Vol. 1; and *The Literature of England*, eds. Woods, Watt, and Anderson, Chicago, 1936, Vol. 1.

COMEDY OF ERRORS

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Since Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* is based partly on Plautus's *The Twin Menaechmi*, it should be interesting to compare the two plays.

1. Shakespeare's Farce. The use of the two sets of twins presents a more extreme version of farce than *The Twin Menaechmi* (the idea may have come from Plautus's *Amphitryon*). Does this seem to you to make for funnier or cleverer situations? Is it a valid rule that, the greater the possibility of mistaken identity, the greater the potential comic effect? Or must other matters be considered? To what extent would comic effects be diminished by the probable state of confusion of the audience? Would the audience feel inclined to make the effort necessary to keep things straightened out?

Yet Shakespeare adds other external complications—the problem of the twins' parents and of Aegeon's saving his life; the Adriana-Antipholus-Luciana triangle plot; the merchant-Angelo complication in Act IV. i. Note how, as he multiplies his attractions, Shakespeare intensifies his problem of winning our assent, our "willing suspension of disbelief." Note to what extent the main plot, as well as occurrences along the way, depends upon coincidence. Is there much effort to motivate the very important meetings of wrong people?

Again, is there any logical reason why Antipholus of Ephesus and his Dromio, when they are trying to get into the former's house in Act III. i, should be able to get absolutely no attention from within?

The essential problem of probability, of course, lies in the attitude of characters to the situations which confront them. Does Shakespeare satisfactorily explain their lack of suspicion and rational inquiry? Note what Antipholus says about his servant in Act I. ii, and what, in general, the Syracusans believe—that they are bewitched Compare this with Menaechmus II's effort to rationalize his experiences. Does Shakespeare work out his method as *thoroughly as Plautus?*

Does the reader have to make too many concessions? Does he find sufficient return in the combination of [illegible]

and pie-throwing farce—the beatings of the Dromios (why do these not seem serious?)? Compare the effort required by Congreve's *Way of the World*.

2. The Change from Farce. Yet the play actually *tends*—not very successfully, of course—to be something more than farce, and we can profitably observe how certain devices bring about changes in tone.

For instance, Aegeon's being in danger of losing his life suggests melodrama or even the problem play. What is accomplished by the amount of space allotted to Aegeon's tale? By the fact that Antipholus of Syracuse falls in love with Luciana? By the fact that the courtesan appears, not as the mistress of Antipholus of Ephesus, but only in an incidental role?

There is an important movement toward drama of character in the change of Plautus's shrewish wife into an [illegible]

farcical rage, introduces some discussion of marital relations—in the manner of the problem play. The difference of opinion serves partly to characterize both sisters, and the contrast between them attracts the interest that in a straight farce might be directed toward vituperation against the missing husband. Adriana is still more interesting, however, in the second part of Act II. ii, where she speaks partly in grief, partly in incredulity, but chiefly with a desire to grasp the fundamental implications of the situation. As she examines infidelity in the light of the doctrine that man and wife are one, she develops the paradoxical position that his adultery becomes hers We are invited to study *and understand rather than to laugh.* How consistently does Shakespeare keep the treatment of Adriana at this level?

How does the tendency away from farce appear at the end of Act III i? In what ways does Balthazar actually suggest the atmosphere of the comedy of manners? Note especially these lines

> Her sober virtue, years, and modesty,
> Plead on her part some cause to you unknown

Here he (1) thinks in terms of character and (2) suggests that there may be a rational explanation of the mystery. Are such actions characteristic of farce?

In Act III ii what serves to make Luciana a developed rather than a blank or passive character? Is her relation to Antipholus used merely for "love interest," or is the love motivated? Note that the romantic element heads off another farcical possibility. When Adriana takes Antipholus of Syracuse home, there is a situation which could lead naturally to "bedroom farce," the kind which skirts the possibility of adultery. But Shakespeare eliminates this possibility by his partly serious treatment of Adriana and by focusing the visiting Antipholus's attentions directly on Luciana. Of

course, the conflict of tones makes a totally satisfactory handling of the Luciana-Antipholus scene practically impossible. If she makes the logical recognition that this is another Antipholus, the play ends; if she accepts Antipholus, her position is inconsistent and immoral; if she rejects him, the later rapprochement is less plausible. What is called for is a treatment of conflict within Luciana, but this is barely suggested; if the treatment were complete, the play would be quite different.

This, then, is the chief problem of the play: in attempting to do several different things, Shakespeare cannot do them all completely or consistently. Do you feel that this is a basic defect or that the interest of the work is increased by giving it to some extent an appeal more mature than that of farce?

OTHER QUESTIONS

3. Trace out Adriana's reaction to the apparent arrest, madness, and immuring of her husband. Is the effect here that of farce or of something else?

4. To what extent does Act IV. ii develop an inner conflict in each of the sisters?

5. Study the different elements in Act V which contribute to a tone of farce or to other tones.

6. What change is effected, if any, by the dropping of Plautus's parasite? Who might be said to replace him?

7. Do the various puns, like that upon *marks* in Act I. ii. 81 ff., and the witticisms, like those in Act II, suggest the effects of farce or of some other kind of comedy?

8. Does Shakespeare handle his exposition differently from Plautus? How useful is the situation in Act I. i for exposition? Does Shakespeare ever rely on Plautus's device of having a character make explanations directly to the audience?

9. Do the Ephesus-Syracuse legal relations, since they affect only a small part of the action, receive disproportionate attention?

10. How does Shakespeare try to rationalize the co-existence of the two sets of twins? Does he do anything about the recurrence of the names (note Plautus's handling of this)?

11. Why, in Act III. i, is the conversation between those inside the house and those outside so managed that no one in either party sees anybody in the other? Is there any effort to make this plausible? Would you say that the scene typifies the procedures of farce?

MAJOR BARBARA *

By G. B. SHAW

In certain regards *Major Barbara* resembles Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*. Like *Rosmersholm*, Shaw's play deals with the disillusionment of an idealist who is forced to see that the springs of human action are other than she has supposed and to realize that the ideals in which she has believed are either masks for ugly realities or are warped by realities into travesties of themselves.

But, whereas Ibsen's play is worked out as a tragedy. Shaw's is developed as a kind of comedy. The difference is pervasive: it has much to do with the fact that one play has an "unhappy" ending and the other an "optimistic" ending. It shows itself in a number of ways: in the brisk tone of Shaw's play,

* This play was printed separately in London, 1912, and New York, 1912; it may also be found in *John Bull's Other Island and Major Barbara*, New York, 1918, and in Vol. XI of the *Collected Works*, New York, 1930 ff.

in its concern for ideas as such, in the lack of preoccupation with the individual and in the concern with society, in the use of fantastic plot situations, swift reversals of situation, etc.

As his preface indicates, Shaw is obviously interested in ideas for their own sake. Does he sacrifice any qualities of the play to his concern for presenting ideas? Is the play merely an extension of the preface? Or does the play as a whole transcend the ideas?

(There can certainly be no objection to the author's using any method he wishes as a means of expressing his ideas—tract, billboard, or play. But if we are trying to judge the status of a play as a play, it is important to determine whether or not the play is being used merely as a vehicle for something else, and whether or not it is an effective vehicle. Moreover, if the play should turn out to be primarily a tract, then we have a right, of course, to apply to it the criteria which one applies to tracts. Every play, of course, deals with a problem, with human problems. The issue is whether it treats them in the manner of a tract or digests and assimilates them to its own being as a great drama does.)

1. Which characters are real? That is, which impress us as being humanly complex? Which are oversimplified [illegible] caricatures? Are the caricatures [illegible] caricatures? That is, in which are [illegible] simplifications and distortions [illegible]fied?

2. Is the initial situation [illegible] realistic? In answering this [illegible] take into account the probab[illegible] Undershaft method of inh[illegible] the probability of Lady [illegible] having a daughter in the [illegible] Army.

3. Does the plot [illegible] farce? Can you justify the [illegible] use of surprise and [illegible] example, Bill's girl [illegible] fallen in love with To[illegible] wrestler, who, it [illegible] been converted by the Salvation Army and, last of all, it comes out that Todger Fairmile is the brother-in-law [illegible] brother of Shirley who has just [illegible] into the Salvation Army but [illegible] first time and gets into talk with [illegible] This set of coincidences obviously [illegible] Barbara's job of pacifying [illegible] siderably simpler. Has the [illegible] oversimplified her task too [illegible]

4. What does Undershaft [illegible] Is he plausible? Is he [illegible]viously, Shaw is using him [illegible] of the points which he [illegible] make Does Shaw [illegible] points, as an essayist [illegible] he embody them [illegible] example, Under[illegible] 'Thou shalt [illegible] with that [illegible] great. . . [illegible] self-made [illegible] Undershaft [illegible] adopted [illegible] shaft [illegible] Armorer [illegible]

[illegible]

ters ever shift position for the sake of scoring a point? Do later speeches ever contradict earlier speeches? Or are the characters ultimately consistent? For example, Undershaft hates poverty for himself and takes means to insure himself against it. Does his single-minded devotion to this end allow room for a desire to eliminate poverty for all men? What motivates his desire to entice Cusins and Barbara into the firm? To increase his own wealth? To have about him people whom he likes? To put power into the hands of idealists for the betterment of the world?

9. Consider the play as a satire. What types of people and what institutions are attacked? How effective is the satire? Illustrate.

10. How does the comedy of Shaw differ from that of Congreve and Sheridan? Are the latter two concerned primarily with the problems of Society or with the private problems of individuals in a society which the authors, though they may laugh at some aspects of it, in the main accept?

11. Insofar as the plot borders on farce, does it tend to resemble the farce of Plautus? Or is there still a fundamental distinction?

RIDERS TO THE SEA*

By JOHN M. SYNGE

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this play is the intensity of effect it achieves in proportion to its unusual brevity. The intensity, no doubt, is the result of a number of factors. The student might investigate the following matters, however, in an effort to see how the play gains its power.

1. The plot (which at first reading may seem over-simple) is actually very tightly packed: it deals with the last day of a long, long struggle which the old mother has waged against the sea. On this day the body of her son Michael is identified, and the last son, Bartley, is drowned. The struggle is over. How do these events gain power from the struggle which they suggest? How does the identification of Michael's body prepare for, or "set up," the death of Bartley?

2. Notice that the play is finally Maurya's play; the tragedy, if it is a tragedy, her tragedy. How is attention directed to her from the very beginning of the play? How do the speeches of the girls focus attention on her reaction to events rather than on their own? Does her reaction to Bartley's death, which comes as a surprise to the girls, constitute the surprise ending of the play? Or does Bartley's death constitute the surprise ending? Is it his death or her reaction to it that focuses the theme of the play?

3. It ought to be apparent that the play gives little scope for full development of the characters. The persons in the play tend to remain types. How does the author make a virtue of this fact, one which would usually be considered a drawback? May it be said that the characters tend to be symbolic? If so, what do they symbolize?

4. What other means of symbolism are used in the play? Consider the white boards, for instance. How do they point

* This play is available in a separate edition, Boston, 1911; in Synge's *Works*, Boston, 1912, and in the *Complete Works*, New York, 1935; in *A Book of Modern Plays*, Lake Library, ed. George R. Coffman, Chicago, 1925; *A Treasury of the Theatre*, ed. R. B. Mantle, New York, 1935; *The Atlantic Book of Modern Plays*, ed. S. A. Leonard, Boston, 1934; and *Representative Modern Dramas*, ed. C. H. Whitman, New York, 1936.

the implications of the play—at the beginning and at the end?

5. It may be said that *Riders to the Sea* consistently uses symbol rather than direct statement, or, in more general terms, understatement rather than overstatement. How does the ending of the play illustrate this method?

6 Is there sufficient struggle in this play? It is true that Maurya tries to keep Bartley from going to the boat But does her action constitute enough conflict to allow the play to be considered a tragedy? Could it be said that this conflict really has its function in pointing to a deeper conflict, of which it is merely one aspect? What is this deeper struggle?

7. Is Maurya too passive to be a tragic protagonist? How would one go about defending the play on this point?

8. Consider the appropriateness of the dialogue to the effect of the play. The speech of these peasants, which is removed from the dialogue of the everyday world, serves what function in the play? Is it, however, too "poetical," that is, unnaturally elevated or prettified? If not, why not?

9 With regard to the importance of the part played by the sea, this play may be compared with Racine's *Phaedra* and Euripides' *Hippolytus*. There is, however, a sharp difference in the meanings given the sea. How do those meanings vary from play to play? How does the meaning of the sea influence the tragic quality of the different plays?

10. What is the difference between the deaths by drowning in *Riders to the Sea* and those in *Rosmersholm?*

APPENDIX B

Historical Sketch of the Drama

As the word *sketch* indicates, the following account is but a very brief and incomplete outline of the development of classical and modern drama. It is intended chiefly for classes in which the instructor wishes to combine the analysis of dramatic forms with the use of historical perspectives. Its principal function is to indicate how the plays discussed in this volume (either in the body of the text or in Appendix A) fit into or illustrate a historical pattern. The names of such plays are preceded by an asterisk.

CLASSICAL DRAMA

Both classical and modern drama are of religious origin, and in part, therefore, the history of both is a record of the evolution from ritualistic beginnings. [illegible] sung by a chorus which also engaged in a ritual dance The first step toward tragedy, it is usually assumed, was the chorus leader's coming to have a separate part and carrying on a "dialogue" with the chorus; then the leader impersonated Dionysus or some other character in a story about Dionysus. Thus he became the "first actor," supposedly the creation of Thespis in the sixth century B.C. Aeschylus added the "second actor" and Sophocles the

third, in the fifth century B.C. Thus, there came about a great increase in the importance of dialogue, and hence of plot and character, and a corresponding decrease in the importance of the chorus.

But the chorus remained, always an integral part of Greek drama; the drama retained its original religious association, the presentation of plays being part of extensive and complex religious services; the "plots" came almost entirely from traditional stories about certain families and individuals and their experiences in a world in which divine agency was always present. In the drama, then, religion and all its imaginative and cultural manifestations were brought to a focus. The religious festival to which the drama belonged took place in the spring, a week-long holiday; it was a community activity and experience; part of the expenses were borne by the state; a strict discipline was observed. At the theatre the audience sat on semicircular benches on a slope; before them danced the chorus on a circular *orchestra* ("dancing place"), in the center of which was an altar of Dionysus; the acting was on the dancing place and possibly on a raised platform behind it. To the rear was the *skene* or tent (for dressing); its wall could be painted to create a *scene*.

Such plays as survive indicate that the fifth century was the high period of Greek drama. During the religious festival tragic poets presented their dramas in competition (there were separate competitions for comic and dithyrambic poets); each competitor had to present a tetralogy—a tragic trilogy plus a less serious "satyr-play." The **Oresteia* of Aeschylus (525–455 B.C.) is the sole surviving trilogy; it illustrates not only the various formal aspects of Greek tragedy, but also the severe tone and high moral concern of Aeschylus. Of his approximately 90 play, 7 survive; he won 13 first prizes. Sophocles (495–405 B.C.) wrote about 125 plays, of which 7 survive; he won 20 first prizes. In his *Antigone* we observe a characteristic conflict of forces to which humanity is subject; in his *Oedipus Rex*, the irony for which Sophocles is distinguished. Euripides (480–406) wrote about 90 plays, won only 4 first places, but became very popular later, as is shown by the survival of 18 of his plays. He was a "modern," so to speak: rather a skeptic of the values which Aeschylus took for granted, somewhat of a psychological analyst, and, in Browning's words, "The Human with his droppings of warm tears." These characteristics all have some part in his **Hippolytus*.

Greek comedy had a separate evolution from Dionysiac ritual. The surviving comedies are later than the tragedies. In the fifth century B.C. there flourished "Old Comedy," characterized by sharp satire of institutions and individuals, obscenity, lustiness, colorful language and farcical effects. The type is brilliantly represented by the 11 surviving plays of Aristophanes (448?–388?), who wrote 40; the 11 are the only complete Greek comedies extant. A conservative, Aristophanes constantly satirized the new and the present—in *The Banqueters*, the New Education; in *The Wasps*, the passion for law courts; in *The Acharnians*, the war with Sparta; *The Frogs*, by the way, shows a preference for Aeschylus over Euripides. Of Middle Comedy, no examples are extant; New Comedy, which flourished in the fourth century, is represented by many fragments of Menander. It was milder in tone than Old Comedy, dealt with types rather than individuals, and used a wide variety of emotional effects, showing the influence of Euripides. Menander's work can be conjecturally estimated from that of Terence, the Roman dramatist who borrowed from him.

Developing partly from primitive native models and to a greater extent by

sented outside instead of inside the church; the Latin, which was the universal language of the Church and hence of the drama, gave way to the vernacular (English, French, etc.); finally the Church gave up all connection with the plays, and they fell into the hands of, and were highly developed by, the Guilds (trade and professional associations). The Guilds of different towns worked up collections of plays known as Cycles—series which presented the Christian world from Creation to Doomsday. The York Cycle, the most complete of the few extant cycles, contains 49 plays. Under the Guilds such plays continued to be popular even through the sixteenth century.

Long before that, however, other important developments had taken place. The basic element in the total secularization of the drama was of course the secularization of the materials; gradually the Biblical stories began to be treated with considerable freedom and originality, and to be expanded by the addition of non-Biblical elements. Noah and his wife, for instance, were often used to provide domestic comedy of a sort analogous to the Jiggs comedy of today. One of the best examples of the almost complete displacement of Biblical by secular material is **The Second Shepherds' Play* (1400?). A considerable broadening of the materials available to drama was accomplished by the Morality Play, a new form which came into prominence in the fifteenth century. It was a dramatic allegory, which is conventionally described as a battle between the Virtues and Vices for the soul of man. Despite the use of abstract characters, the Morality was often very concrete in detail, and, applied to current educational and political themes, it was popular throughout the sixteenth century. The best example of the Morality Play is **Everyman* (ca. 1500?).

The next step toward completely secular themes and toward secularized and individualized characters may be seen in the comic plays of John Heywood (called Interludes) in the first third of the sixteenth century. By this time, however, the spread of classical learning, which was the most conspicuous feature of the Renaissance, was bringing about considerable familiarity with the Roman drama, and from it were learned lessons about form, plot, and characterization. Full-length five-act plays appeared, with more complex plots and more mature characterization. Roman influence appears strongly in such a comedy as Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* (ca. 1540?) and such a tragedy as Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc* (ca. 1560?). After the mid-sixteenth century, then, the English drama, open to all kinds of materials and characters, and growing constantly more familiar with the fully developed classical forms, was ready for the perfecting touch of skilled artists. This development from fairly primitive to rather mature forms was largely the work of a set of brilliant young graduates of the universities—usually called "The University Wits"—who began writing for the theatre in the 1580's. Such men as George Peele, John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, and Thomas Kyd not only gave the drama a more skillful management of plot and a profounder characterization than it had known before, but also created the various comic and tragic types which Skakespeare and his later contemporaries were to use so brilliantly.

Shakespeare, who did most of his writing between 1590 and 1610, began his career with simpler types such as the *Henry VI* plays and **Comedy of Errors* (1591). Then he went on to develop the comic genre in such plays as *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, and, in the **Henry IV* plays, to develop the "chronicle" play as very successful mature comedy. To his third period, the first decade of the seventeenth century, belong the tragedies—*Lear*,

Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth; and at the end came such plays as *The Tempest.* The plays are in verse form; they represent the wedding of great drama with great poetry. Poetic brilliance also characterizes other Elizabethan dramatists—Webster, Tourneur, Middleton, Rowley, Shirley, Ford in tragedy (even when sensationalism and sentimentalism begin to make inroads); Dekker, Massinger, Marston, Middleton, and Shirley in comedy. Notable in the period also are the romantic comedies of Beaumont and Fletcher, the "humors" comedy of Jonson, and the domestic drama of Heywood. The age finally ends with the closing of the theatres by the Puritans in 1642.

In other countries in Europe drama developed from its medieval phase by steps analogous to those which occurred in England. The Renaissance drama [illegible] Spain and France [illegible] thousand plays. He is well known for the romantic "cape and sword" play exemplified by *The Star of Seville* and for a more mature type in which is found a mixture of comedy, tragedy, and the problem play—as in **The King the Greatest Alcalde.* Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681) wrote romantic drama often considered to be philosophical, such as *Life is a Dream.* The great period of the French drama was the seventeenth century, when, under the influence of the French Academy, the "classical rules" became much more important than they ever were in England. In tragedy the chief names are Pierre Corneille (1606–1684) and Jean Racine (1639–1699); working within the neo-classical conventions, the latter produced a poetic drama in which human nature is penetratingly grasped. His **Phaedra* is one of his best known plays. Molière (Jean Baptiste Poquelin, 1622–1673) wrote brilliant satirical comedies such as *Les Précieuses Ridicules* and *Tartuffe.* Classicism held on tenaciously in the French drama, finally giving way, in the eighteenth century, to the domestic drama of Diderot and others, and, in the nineteenth, to the romantic and historical plays of Victor Hugo.

After the Restoration in 1660, the brilliance of Elizabethan tragedy is gone. We find instead the so-called "heroic drama" of Dryden and others—a romantic rhetorical genre frequently hingeing on such conflicts as that between love and honor; the tragedy of Otway and others in which pathos is stressed; "classical" or "rules" tragedy, successfully practiced in Dryden's *All for Love* (1677) and then declining for the next century. Restoration drama reached its peak in comedy of manners—the gay, witty, satirical presentations of the sophisticated world which we see in Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. Actually, the most famous play from the group, Congreve's **The Way of the World*, as well as much of the work of Vanbrugh and Farquhar, falls in the eighteenth century, which then sees the gradual disappearance of comedy of manners and the rise of sentimental comedy. Exemplified in such plays as Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers*, this type tends to substitute the admiration of virtue for the ridicule of folly, its influence extends even to Sheridan, whose **The School for Scandal* is a late-century effort to rehabilitate the comedy of manners. The bourgeois influence, to which the change in comedy is generally ascribed, also affects tragedy: in Lillo's **The London Merchant*, moralizing is joined with sentimental and melodramatic effects. With the decline of both tragic and comic perception, the turn of the century sees drama at a new low; Morton's **Speed the Plough* illustrates the combination of farce and melodrama which dominated much of the nineteenth-century theatre.

In the meantime the Romantic poets

were writing a good deal of closet drama; some Romantic work—plays by Goethe, Schiller, and Victor Hugo, for instance—had considerable influence upon the theatre; Shelley's tragedy *The Cenci* and Goethe's philosophical *Faust* have been of continuing literary interest. The Romantic impulse is always more or less present, of course, and we find it, in a specialized manifestation, in Rostand's **Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897).

In the last seventy-five years, however, the dominant force in the drama may be said to have been the "problem"—the special issue arising out of contemporary economic, social, and political conditions. The strongest influence has been that of the Norwegian Ibsen in such plays as *The Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, and *The Enemy of the People;* at his best, as in **Rosmersholm*, we see Ibsen approaching tragedy. In France, problem plays were written by Brieux; in England, by a succession of dramatists including T. W. Robertson, Sir A. W. Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, John Galsworthy, Granville Barker, etc. Two witty Irishmen have dealt with problems in a special way. Oscar Wilde has combined the problem play with the epigrammatic comedy of manners, as **Lady Windermere's Fan* indicates. George Bernard Shaw embodies his treatment of the problem in an argumentative realistic comedy which specializes in turning accepted points of view upside down. **Major Barbara* sheds light upon his methods. It is impossible to list here the innumerable contemporary writers of problem plays. Suffice it to say that Maugham's **The Circle* shows a rather witty treatment of a problem in personal conduct, while Rice's **Street Scene* illustrates an American handling of a problem of society. In recent years there has been a special concern with psychological problems, such as that treated in Howard's **The Silver Cord.* It is of course not fair to the varied productions of Eugene O'Neill to describe him wholly in such terms, but **Mourning Becomes Electra*, at least, does exhibit the psychological interest at an extreme—the reduction of an ancient myth to terms of modern abnormal psychology.

A special feature of twentieth-century drama has been the Irish drama, which, with its stress upon Irish themes and language, exemplifies a rather widespread modern tendency to find special expression for national and local themes. The chief figures in the Irish movement were Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Synge, whose **Riders to the Sea* is one of the most popular Irish plays. In the Irish plays, too, we find a good deal of the symbolism which, from Ibsen on, has had a regular if minor place in modern drama, and of the use of poetic form with which there has been a good deal of experimentation. In America it is especially Maxwell Anderson who has essayed the poetic drama. T. S. Eliot's **Murder in the Cathedral* is a very interesting example of the type.

Perhaps the coincidence of O'Neill's reducing an ancient drama of moral and religious significance to terms of abnormal psychology, and Eliot's returning both to the religious theme and the poetic form which originally belonged to all drama—perhaps this coincidence indicates that we are coming or have come to the end of some kind of definable cycle.

GLOSSARY

I. SOME PRINCIPLES OF DRAMA

CERTAIN ASPECTS of drama are here given slightly longer definitions than can be conveniently fitted into the usual short glossary. This arrangement also makes possible a connected discussion of several related terms.

ARISTOTLE'S POETICS

Aristotle's discussion of tragedy has been mentioned frequently in this book. Some of his important points—this is far from a complete list—are the following*:

1. Tragedy represents men "as better than in actual life."

2. It "endeavours, as far as possible, *to confine itself to a single revolution* of the sun, or but slightly to exceed this limit."

3. ". . . through pity and fear" it effects "the proper purgation of these emotions."

4. ". . . most important of all is the structure of the incidents. . . Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all"

5. "Character is that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kind of things a man chooses or avoids"

6. "*A whole is that which has a beginning*, a middle, and an end. A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be. An end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing following it. A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it. A well constructed plot, therefore, must neither begin nor end at haphazard, but conform to these principles."

* *Quotations in Butcher's translation.*

7. "Unity of *plot does not . . .* consist in the unity of the hero. . . . The plot, being an imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be *disjointed and disturbed*."

8. Tragedy presents not "what has happened, but what may happen." It "tends to express the universal," that is, "how a person of a certain type will on occasion speak or act, according to the law of probability or necessity. . . ."

9. "*Of all plots and actions the episodic* are the worst I call a plot 'episodic' in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence."

10 The effect of pity and terror "is best produced when the events come on us by *surprise; and the effect is* heightened when, at the same time, they follow as cause and effect."

11 An aid to the proper effect of tragedy is the reversal, "by which the [illegible]

[illegible] *dramatic irony*).

12. The proper effect is not produced by "the spectacle of a virtuous man

brought from prosperity to adversity," nor by "that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity," nor by "the downfall of the utter villain. . . ."

13. The proper tragic hero is "a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty" (the "tragic flaw").

14. Tragedy must not depend upon spectacle, upon extraneous aids, or upon the "monstrous," "for we must not demand of Tragedy any and every kind of pleasure, but only that which is proper to it."

15. Character must be good, true to life, consistent with itself and with the class to which the person belongs; the dramatist should aim at the necessary and the probable.

16. The "unravelling of the plot, no less than the complication, must arise out of the plot itself; it must not be brought about by the *Deus ex Machina* . . ."

17. Recognitions, of persons or facts, are worst when brought about by signs such as birthmarks; best when they arise "from the incidents themselves, where the startling discovery is made by natural means."

18. The chorus "should be regarded as one of the actors; it should be an integral part of the whole, and share in the action, in the manner not of Euripides but of Sophocles."

19. "With respect to the requirements of art, a probable impossibility is to be preferred to a thing improbable and yet possible."

CONVENTIONS

In the study of all arts we hear a good deal about certain "conventions." In understanding the drama we need to know something about its conventions.

A story is told of a woman who, when a theatrical performance produced in her a stronger emotional response than she liked, toned down her feelings by assuring herself, "But this is only a play." Now what she was doing was deliberately destroying the *illusion* upon which a work of art depends. It is obvious that if a spectator is going to say, "This is only a play," or "These are only words on a printed page," or "This is only paint upon a canvas," the play or poem or painting cannot "work" for him, cannot exist as forms which have a reality greater than and different from the bare physical elements of which they are composed. For a work of art to have a reality of its own—or, in other critical terms, to give an illusion of reality—there are two fundamental necessities: the spectator must be capable of exercising, and willing to exercise, his imagination (the suspension of disbelief, Coleridge called it), and the work itself must do certain things to engage his imagination. The former needs no discussion here, but the latter needs amplification.

Note that at the start the normal theatregoer accepts, as part of the *artistic reality*, certain conditions which do not conform to everyday reality. At the movies he sees only certain combinations of light and color, which he accepts as the equivalents of people in action. Furthermore, he sees only a two-dimensional representation, to which he himself adds depth. At a puppet-show he sees six-inch figures which he accepts as actual persons of full-size—so successfully that at the end the operator who steps into the stage seems like a grotesque giant. At the legitimate theatre he does see people like himself, but their actions take place in a generally three-sided place which is supposedly a normal outdoor or indoor scene. This discrepancy he is not bothered by, however; he takes walls away or adds them, as necessary, and he transforms himself from a physically present intruder into an invisible spectator whose presence can be no bar to the carrying on of very private actions and conversations.

We always make these adjustments, even without being aware of it; that is, we accept certain *conventions*. A convention is a common agreement—either arrived at arbitrarily, like the ground rules at a baseball game, or resulting from long practice, like certain phases of etiquette Conventions save questions, quibbles, needless argument; they are conveniences, and we do not demand that they be rational in the way that a debate, for instance, should be rational.

All kinds of dramatic and theatrical entertainments depend fundamentally upon conventions—that is, upon our willing acceptance of certain conventional substitutions for everyday reality. It is agreed at the outset that we will use our imaginations to make the jump from the partial representation to the complete reality.* Now, given this initial situation, the drama can go on to engage the imagination, by every means available, in much more complex and far-reaching activities Of course its chief means is *character*, the center of all narrative forms of literature. The author must use the *concrete*, actions and characters must be consistent; causes must be adequate to explain effects. Unless he is striving for the special effects of fantasy, the author must work preponderantly from the known world. Using the terms in the broadest sense, the devices by which he bids for the reader's acceptance are *realistic* and *logical*.

Once we have said that, however, we must immediately qualify it by saying that the dramatist also has available many devices which in the ordinary sense are not realistic and logical at all These we can again describe by the word "conventions." Conventions vary greatly from age to age, but in one way they are all alike: they are accepted as legitimate parts of the writer's machinery, whether or not they cohere with our experience in the "real" world

Since the conventions of an alien stage, because of their unfamiliarity are easier to perceive than our own, the student may find it convenient here to read the account of the conventions of the Roman stage in Part 2 of the analysis of Plautus's *The Twin Menaechmi* (p. 141). Several of the conventions of the Plautine drama are in wide general use—*asides*, for instance, the speeches heard by the audience but not by the characters on the stage. These were much used in Shakespeare's day and continued to appear in succeeding centuries. Note that they appear especially in comedy and in the melodrama that developed in the nineteenth century In our day Eugene O'Neill has employed them in a very special and elaborate way—using them regularly throughout a play to denote a character's real thoughts as contrasted with what he says in his regular speeches

Another familiar convention is the *soliloquy*, which may be used very skillfully (as in Shakespeare) to analyze an individual's state of mind or very awkwardly to convey information (that is, for *exposition*) which the author is not skillful or conscientious enough to present in more dramatic terms. Conventions regarding *stage settings* vary a good deal in classical and Elizabethan days they were simple and suggestive, whereas early in the twentieth century there developed a cult of minute accuracy which allowed the imagination as limited a function as did neo-classical conceptions of time and place. More recently we have seen reversions to simplicity and the wider use of th symbolic. Conventions in *costume* a

* Only in the neoclassical period did critics generally insist that the stage ought to duplicate, as minutely as possible, all the characteristics of the actions it was representing, and to choose for representation only such actions as it could reproduce with slavish fidelity. Such a prescription disregarded the function of the imagination

not consistent: in his own day Shakespeare's characters appeared in contemporary dress, but in our day they are costumed according to the period depicted by the play. Again there are varying conventions with regard to language: in comic writing there has always been much more use of prose and the prosaic, of the rhythm and vocabulary of actual speech, whereas until the last century tragedy was regularly done in the *language of poetry* (whether good poetry or bad poetry). There have even been different conventions of poetic language: for instance, Dryden, Addison, and Johnson in different degrees thought it highly improper to use the wide vocabulary and complex figurative language that Shakespeare used. Other dramatic genres function in terms of other conventions: a *romantic* work, for instance, in general depends upon our acceptance of a simpler kind of characterization than is necessary for tragedy or high comedy.

Obviously, any dramatist is in some way or other dependent upon conventions. His problem is to utilize them as necessary or helpful in the construction of his individual dramatic view of things, but to avoid depending on them so fully that he turns out a machine-made job, perhaps momentarily acceptable on a certain level, but doomed to rejection by sharper minds or by everyone when conventions change. If for exposition or for display of inner conflicts or for other effects he relies too largely on soliloquies or asides, he shirks the dramatist's main technical obligation. If he writes tragedy in verse because it is the convention to do so, but lacks the command of metaphor and other devices which mark the distinction between poetry and metrical prose, he fails. If he characterizes according to certain conventions—creating, for instance, the simple hero and villain of melodrama—his result is a stereotype. In other words, to rely unduly on accepted attitudes and procedures is to end in a lifeless *conventionality*. Conventions are useful; complete conventionality is deadly.

In leaving this subject, we find three things that we ought to keep in mind:

1. Drama, like other art forms, depends at the start upon certain conventions, certain terms agreed on by both the dramatist and his audience; and individual plays are always developed partly by means of certain conventional devices. To question these, to say, "This is not like life," is to be rather naïve. On the other hand, not to recognize conventions as such and not to understand their role, is not to be fully informed about the nature of drama.

2. We should always be aware of the fluctuating line between the acceptable utilization of conventions and an undiscriminating reliance on them. The commonplace in literature is largely the result of overworked conventionalism. Conventions may be used brilliantly: Shakespeare took over the standard blank verse of Elizabethan drama and made it an instrument of great poetry. Thus he provides the key to the difficult task facing any writer who looks beyond the box-office: though he must depend, unless he is the rare innovator who achieves high excellence, largely on the materials and methods both of his age and of the form in which he writes, he must transcend these conventions—through them rise to a quality which will be apparent to periods with different expectations.

3. A convention may actually embody a principle which at first glance we may not recognize as such. T. S. Eliot argues that the language of tragedy is poetry. If that is true, what appears on one level as a convention is on a deeper level a formal necessity, an essential quality.

MOTIVATION

Motivation, a word that is widely used in the discussion of drama (and like-

wise of other narrative forms), has a number of connotations. At the most literal level an author has "motivated" an action when he has presented an adequate "motive" for it: here the question is really one of successful *characterization*. If the reader feels that A's hatred of B is well accounted for and is consistent with A's character, or that A's shift to indifference toward B is acceptable in terms of what has happened and of what we know of A, then the hatred, or the disappearance of the hatred, is said to be "well motivated." But note that we are not willing to have an author depend, for his motivation, upon mere *stock responses*, that is, to make too easy appeals to patriotism, mother love, "loyalty," and so on. Anybody can do that. So we do not accept A's being devoted to B merely because they are related, or because A is indebted to B ("He gave me my start"), or because they come from the same state, or because the devotion is "nice" or makes unguarded people "feel warm inside" We expect the dramatist to present *concrete* evidence (actions, thoughts) that accounts specifically for this devotion; this will be interpretative, and will not merely rely upon our thinking that devotion is a fine thing but will indicate the quality and significance of the devotion—as misguided, unselfish, unwilling, sentimental, despairing, cynical, profit-seeking, fanatical In other words, devotion (and so hate or curiosity or any other expression of character) varies in individual cases, and it is only by a consciousness and understanding of individual variations—and thus a repudiation of general, stereotyped reactions—that an author can present a case with the convincing accurateness that will deserve the term "well motivated." In this sense, motivation leads us into a fairly complex problem of the author's grasp of meanings and values, we really get down to the ultimate excellence or badness of the play. What he has done with a character depends upon the skill with which he can express his discriminations in concrete *dramatic forms*.

Motivation, however, is also widely used [illegible] and [illegible] force [illegible] of character) involved in them. When events and occurrences appear to lack a proper cause, reason, or justification, we call them "unmotivated" We all are familiar with certain types of unmotivated action: the unexpected death which conveniently removes troublesome characters; the legacy which solves all financial problems; the character who suddenly shows up to straighten out difficult situations—the *deus ex machina*, as he is called (the rich uncle, the lost brother, the detective, etc.); the *coincidence* by which things happen, or people meet, or don't meet, at just the right time—in immediate theatrical terms, the vast number of exits and entrances which are very convenient but not at all logical (note how large the problem looms in the *Menaechmi*). Even at this level, where things are simpler than those discussed in the preceding paragraph, we get somewhat into the realm of meanings and values: obviously an author who believes that vital issues can be dealt with in terms of legacies and sudden deaths is not one whose interpretation of experience we can take very seriously.

Notice that we can almost equate "unmotivated" and "*unexpected*." That is, if action or conduct is reasonable and logical, we can, at least in a general way, anticipate it And we anticipate it because in some way or other we have been given advance notice of it. Obviously, an author does not say outright that such-and-such a thing is going to happen (we are all familiar with the crude "But as we shall see, he would live to rue this unjust victory") He suggests it, he gives us information which will lead us to make certain inferences. If a character is ill

or is given to taking great risks, his death will seem probable. If a character has shown skill in acting and deception, we can accept easily his carrying out of a great hoax (see the *Second Shepherds' Play*). Evidence of habitual reckless driving can "motivate" an automobile accident; of generosity, a benefaction; of sensitiveness, abnormally defensive behavior. If we are going to have a man drown or fall off a cliff, we need to know in advance that the river or cliff is there; if we are going to have a screen scene, we must know about the screen (see *The School for Scandal*); if a character is going to be called away suddenly by financial problems, we must know about the financial problems in advance. If a character is going to be detained somewhere and thus make possible a scene which his presence would prevent, we should have good reason to expect his detention. It has been said, concerning well-planned and articulated plays of our day, that if you see a gun in Act I, you know that there is going to be a suicide or murder in Act III. This sort of thing naturally can become too easy, and planning in terms of character is still fundamental; but it is well to keep in mind that Act III needs also to be set up in mechanical terms.

The process of leading up to subsequent events and situations is sometimes simply referred to as "preparation," sometimes also as *dramatic foreshadowing*. The latter term is also used to describe the creation of an *atmosphere*—for instance, ominousness—which will in itself suggest developments of a certain kind. This could be managed very awkwardly (by the use of "omens," superstitions, lighting effects, etc.) or quite skillfully (in terms of character—as in *Macbeth*, for instance). However managed, dramatic foreshadowing thus conceived takes us over into another extensive subject—*tone*. *Tone* may be defined as the reflection in the artist's work of the artist's attitude toward his materials. The tone of a literary work, for example, may be playfúl or solemn, ironic or naïve, etc. A full discussion of tone would, indeed, be extensive, for the tone of a play, in its most inclusive sense, may be considered merely the working out of the author's attitude toward the world which he portrays. Rather than elaborating a full discussion of tone at that level, however, we are here simply indicating that consistency of tone is a kind of index of the way in which things are going and thus an aspect of motivation. If an author shifts his tone, evokes responses that do not support each other (as in many musical shows), we may feel either that he is inept or that he is sacrificing everything to a presumably astonishing variety. Or he may carefully build up a single consistent impression—that the whole thing is playful, perhaps, or that it is all of quite serious import. Necessary as this is, it will not cover up other limitations: a farce such as the *Menaechmi* may be admirably consistent in tone but still entirely lack treatment of character and hence motivation in mature human terms.

It may be convenient, in summary, to divide motivation into two parts: (1) the adequate provision, usually by advance notice of some kind, for all materials, mechanical matters, occurrences, and non-voluntary actions that the author is going to make use of; (2) the adequate provision for all actions which spring from character—that is, consistency, thoroughness, and individuality of characterization, made apparent in concreteness of presentation from the beginning of the play on. If a playwright fails in the former, he will seem careless or awkward, and he will certainly lack finish, perhaps to a degree that will seriously interfere with the success of his work. But if he fails in the latter, he will fail in the fundamental quality on which the work depends.

Note, finally, that as a well motivated work may be distinguished by the quality of expectedness, any work which

depends for its effect upon unexpectedness is going to pay very little attention to motivation. That is, it is of the very nature of *farce* and *melodrama,* which rely upon speed, surprise, and shock, to keep the audience uninformed, and to present characters so superficially that the author can at any time have them do almost anything he may want for effect (cf. the *Menaechmi* and *Speed the Plough*) And here we come to two great ironies of literary study: unexpectedness itself tends to become stereotyped, and farce and melodrama, when not done by the most skillful hand, can become the most tediously

praise of Shakespeare) really gains the virtue of being unexpected: in the hands of a first-rate artist a profound treatment of character, with the unerring consistency that is the best motivation, inevitably comes across with the freshness of something wholly new.

TEMPO

Tempo is the pace or speed at which a given scene or a whole work moves, and in a play it will obviously depend upon certain aspects of the dialogue. But since all authors are concerned with tempo, the problem of the dramatist can be illuminated by some comparison of plays and fiction.

The importance of tempo is some-

instance, how a single joke can be spoiled by improper timing. We need time for certain effects to sink in, and too much speed may spoil a good point. Contrariwise, too much delay may wear suspense thin. An interruption—though it may not, for instance, interfere with the logical progress of a story—may seriously mar the effect because the time-relationship of the parts is disrupted. Some such consideration is often behind the request, "Come on, let's start over again."

In a play, actors may vary the pace of speeches, and stage directions like "*Slowly*" or "*Rapidly*" may cause the reader to make some adjustments; but in general we have the impression of moving from speech to speech at a rather constant speed. A storywriter can more easily make his material appear to move at different speeds. He is free to break up a dialogue at any point by a descriptive or analytical passage, which can affect the tempo in two ways. If the inserted passage is a brief summary of a part of the conversation, the author will speed up the movement by making us feel that we have covered a period of time in less time than the original events took. But if the inserted passage is a description of the feelings or thoughts or sensations of one speaker, and if this passage does not replace dialogue, but is, as it were, simply put in between two speeches which otherwise would come one right after the other, we would obviously have a sense of being slowed down. That is, a short period of time in the action takes a relatively long period of time for the reader to experience it.

The principle involved can be presented more concretely in a comparison of two actual passages. Let us first look at part of a scene from a play:

Trowbridge: Can we count on you, then, or can't we?

Maxon I told you I'm not sure.

Trowbridge You've had plenty of time to make up your mind.

Maxon I know, but making up your mind is not as easy as talking about it.

Trowbridge If you don't make up your mind, it's because you don't want to face the issue.

Maxon That's not fair. I've faced—

Trowbridge What you did once doesn't prove anything now If you don't come along, it's because you won't face it when the heat is on This is the only chance to beat them.

Maxon That's what you say.

Trowbridge: All right, I'm finished. This is the end. Are you coming or aren't you?
Maxon: [*After long pause*]. I guess not.

Now notice the same scene as handled in fiction, with the speeches kept intact to facilitate the comparison.

"Can we count on you, then, or can't we?" Trowbridge was angry, and his moving toward the door seemed less an act of departure than a move necessary to use up the physical energy that his emotion had released. In a less forceful man, it might have been a retreat; with him, it was a threat.

Maxon followed, but more slowly. He looked down. He was unwilling. Had he not looked in good enough health—tanned, his jersey revealing heavy muscles—he would have struck you as a sick man dragging himself off to the medicine cabinet.

"I told you I'm not sure." It was a complaint; not a statement of fact. He might have been an amateur gambler mourning a fate that had done him no justice.

Trowbridge said, holding himself in, "You've had plenty of time to make up your mind." The condemnation was unspokenly profane.

Maxon twisted the string of the hall lamp. So his own efforts twisted him about before his judge.

"I know, but making up your mind is not as easy as talking about it."

Trowbridge moved closer again. When he stood still, he talked louder.

"If you don't make up your mind, it's because you don't want to face the issue."

Maxon whipped up a shadow of resentment.

"That's not fair. I've faced—"

"What you did once doesn't prove anything now." Trowbridge charged in. "If you don't come along, it's because you won't face it when the heat is on. This is the only chance to beat them."

"That's what you say." Like a schoolboy.

"All right, I'm finished. This is the end." Half turned to the door, he was relaxed again. But he was inexorable. "Are you coming or aren't you?"

This was the minute. No delay any more. No stalling. You could get off the track or be hit. It was impossible to be where some thing was going on and still be an innocent bystander. If you had only been a bystander in the past—yes. But then the problems had not seemed too hard. The boys had all pretty much stuck together. They hadn't been going after much. It was not that it had been safe, but that no real decisions had been asked. No bridge-burning. He had fallen in. He hadn't been a bystander. There hadn't been many bystanders. A wormy crowd, he had thought them. But not wormy through and through; just some bad spots here and there. The boys hadn't paid them enough attention to work up bad names for them—well, this wasn't then. The worm turns. Joke, eh. This was different. He wasn't different. He was the same. He hadn't had to face this sort of thing before. He was standing in fire, shriveling bit by bit. He wasn't surprised to hear his febrile gasp,

"I guess not."

With the same dialogue, the fiction form comes to triple the length of the drama form, and it could, without padding, be still longer. That is to say that in general it moves more slowly. In one sense, indeed, drama is always going to move "faster" than fiction: it selects briefer and fewer aspects of a total experience to deal with, and it presents them in a more compressed form.

To go back to the piece of prose fiction above, we can see that there are variations of pace even *within* this little episode. We see that the first three or four speeches are accompanied by descriptive passages: the writer is trying to convey the total effect of the scene, and so he takes it more slowly. In the middle of the piece, however, he cuts the description to a bare minimum, and consequently the pace is accelerated. Thus he gets both variety and a sense of heightened tension. Further, he builds up to the climax of the scene, Maxon's definite answer. He wants this to sink in—the difficulty and importance of it, and so he withholds Maxon's answer while we read auxiliary material, this time not a description of external appearances but an analysis of what is going on in Maxon's mind. So the author "holds" this part of the incident, slows it up almost to a standstill.

Just as in other matters, so in timing

the novelist has greater resources than the dramatist. In fact, the ways in which he can "time" a scene are almost infinite. But the dramatist is limited. As we have seen, he cannot describe, nor, except with difficulty, analyze mental operations.

Does this mean that he is entirely without resources? No, it does not. He can, at the simplest level, use typographic devices freely. He can have a speech printed like this:

Maxon· Well—[*he pauses, as if to get breath*]. Well—[*another effort at speech also fails*] I don't—I don't [*he grabs for words, but they don't come*] I don't—see [*Trowbridge keeps a set expression*], I don't see . . . [*voice trails off*]

Plainly, however, this is an artificial device which must be used very sparingly A related procedure—really an amplification of this—would be to insert descriptive passages between speeches, that is, to enlarge and prolong stage directions. More recent plays do this more frequently than older ones But such passages, for one thing, are really outside the play; and, in so far as they do become integrated, the play is really being transformed into a novel. The dramatist is not facing his problem but avoiding it. It is easy to see that the dramatist, instead of doctoring up his play with devices borrowed from another form, can do better by using several potentialities of his own medium.

1. One of these potentialities is the length and structure of speeches. Shortening them will speed them up; one's eye literally runs down a page in which each speech is composed of only a word or two. Or, if the subject of the dialogue does not easily permit this sort of treatment, different kinds of structure within a speech will appreciably affect its tempo. Compare these two speeches:

If you can assist, and are willing to, the problem, though it may not be solved, will at least have begun to assume clear outlines.

Come on, let's get to work. You can be a lot of help. Show us how to organize it. Lend us a hand. Let's go

Both speeches contain the same number of words. But the former, with its longer units and more involved structure, tends to hold us up and thus to give us the impression of a leisurely, considered manner of speech. The latter, broken up into five sentences and using the imperative mood, gives us the impression of haste and impatience. Thus the *rhetorical structure*, as we may call it, greatly influences the tempo (as well as other qualities) of the speech.

2. As the dramatist can vary the structure of a single speech and can vary the length of speeches with respect to each other, so can he vary larger units. Two characters A and B can speak to each other a short time in comparison with the time that C and D speak to each other, or A can speak to B longer than to C. Regardless of internal structure, the shorter scene will seem to move more quickly.

3. But the preceding point does not hold absolutely, for the "density" of a speech may outweigh the length in influencing sense of speed. A complexly metaphorical speech may be of such weight as to slow up a scene very effectively. In fact, a 50 or 75-word speech so composed may move more slowly than 200 words or more of direct, matter-of-fact statement. The "Tomorrow and tomorrow" speech of Macbeth is short, but its pace is very deliberate

But as we examine the subject a little more closely, another fact comes into view: the dramatist cannot arbitrarily use these devices to lengthen or shorten speeches and scenes. Changes in tempo, though they help produce a necessary variety, *cannot be used merely for the sake of that variety*. They are subject to a rigorous *logic*. tempo is a way of interpreting materials, and these latter will determine what goes fast and what slow A failure in tempo is actually an undi-

cation of faulty understanding in the writer. Too much speed means either that the writer has underestimated the stress which a scene ought to have or has not properly adjusted the dialogue to the function it must perform. Correspondingly, a sense of slowness means an overdevelopment of a theme or a failure to make minor alterations in style as a combination of over-emphasis of some parts and under-emphasis of others, so that all tend to have the same weight and movement.

Thus tempo, we may say, is *functional*—a part of the complex of means by which the author says what he has to say. Therefore tempo is not really separable from other aspects of the dramatic process; with minor exceptions it cannot be changed independently, that is, without making changes in, for instance, emphasis. The Maxon-Trowbridge dialogue is really a different thing from the Maxon-Trowbridge scene as described in fiction form. In the former, our attention is focused exclusively on a central aspect of the conflict, its expression in words; in the latter we see, besides the conflict in verbal form, the physical surroundings, certain physical aspects of conflict, including some analysis of the relation of past to present. In other words, the process of slowing down the movement is the same as making a more elaborate interpretation of, and therefore radically changing, a scene. Just as the length of a scene is a criterion (though not the only possible one) of its significance, so the structure of each speech must represent more than an effort to secure variety of movement. For it must be related, as we have seen before, to the character and to the immediate situation: an inarticulate or unlearned person is not likely ever to launch into flowing periods, nor a well-disciplined individual to break down into unrelated interjections. Both length and density of a speech vary according to the individual and the situation which he is in; stresses cannot be added unless they are logical in these terms.

In summary, then, we find the matter of tempo embedded in a complex set of interrelationships. At a rather simple level, of course, the dramatist can effect certain changes of pace by the skillful use of mechanical devices. But success or failure in the superficial manipulation of these devices will not ultimately be able to produce profound excellence or inflict fatal damage. For the means by which a writer produces a sense of changed tempo must be used with respect to more fundamental matters. If there is to be a contrast in length of scenes, it must be justified by the extent and importance of the materials to be dealt with in these scenes. Similarly with the length, density, and other rhetorical devices in the individual speeches. When the parts of a play are so timed that we have a sense not only of variety but also of appropriateness of movement, we know that the author has assessed his material competently, proportioning stress to importance by extended treatment or other devices, securing modulation by arrangement of scene, and so presenting his conflict in human terms that the contrast itself is developed in the timing.

TYPES: FARCE AND MELODRAMA

Farce and *melodrama* depend upon action that is unrelated to character or at best stems from characters so superficial or stereotyped that they are incapable of voluntary action of any importance. Farce, if it succeeds at all, evokes laughter; melodrama plays upon a variety of emotions—excitement, fear, horror, righteous indignation, satisfaction in the due punishment of evil or rewarding of good.

Of course, *farce* and *high comedy* both evoke laughter, and the line between them cannot be exactly drawn; any play dealing with the transitory and the

relative, as comedy does (see the analysis of *Lady Windermere's Fan*), is going to tend toward one extreme or the other. [illegible] Aristotle, represents people as being worse than they are). If we apply this criterion also to farce, we can perhaps distinguish it from comedy by noting *the different* ways in which each produces the sense of superiority. There are different levels on which a character may be made to look ridiculous. At the simplest, of course, he can be put into a ridiculous physical situation, as in a pie-throwing farce. The efforts of the Merry Wives of Windsor to make a fool of Falstaff do not depart very far from this category. But we begin to move from farce toward a higher grade of comedy when we find, first, that the character's situation is brought about less by some one else's scheming and more by his own qualities, and, second, that the situation moves toward the psychological or social and away from its dependence on the physical. Thus in *The School for Scandal* Joseph Surface fails in various plans and is publicly embarrassed for his hypocrisy; in Jonson's *Volpone* the greedy characters suffer legal punishment. But in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Society—which may be said to be a comic character in the play—is merely made the object of witticisms, and Lady Berwick is merely *presented* as a loquacious, managerial opportunist. Her punishment, if we may call it that, is the subtlest: it consists merely in the attitude of the reader to her.

An author may set out to write farce; or he may aspire to comedy, but by sheer ineptitude land in farce. Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* is based upon several cases of confused identity—a situation which obviously cannot go much beyond the farcical. Jonson's *Volpone* is a satire of greed in which the characters come through so clearly that we have almost no feeling of a dependence on mere situation. If the author of the late medieval *Second Shepherds' Play* had known the term, he would doubtless have called his work a farce, yet the humorous situation of the play grows enough out of the characters to make some approach to comedy. On the other hand, while Morton in *Speed the Plough* must have felt that he was achieving real comic effects, he constantly falls into farce. See the notes on that play in Appendix B.

Some light is shed on the meaning of the word *farce* by our very common expression "It's a farce," which we use to describe almost anything that in a ridiculous way fails to achieve its pretensions.

TYPES: MELODRAMA, PROBLEM PLAY, AND TRAGEDY

Like farce, melodrama may be described as unmotivated in terms of character, and also like farce, it may result from an unsuccessful effort to write something else, such as tragedy or a *problem play*. When the author fails to present characters profoundly enough and individually enough [illegible], what results may be dull or laughable or possibly even exciting in a way. In so far as it avoids ideas and skims over characters, it is melodrama. *Speed the Plough* provides a very good example of the kind of melodrama that results when the author is unwilling to treat his characters and situations seriously enough. When it turns out that the central situation is due to a misunderstanding, that there is no real moral or psychological issue, the author has really run out on his problem: all he has left is such suspense as he can get by keeping the bare facts of the case in the dark.

We should, however, guard against seeing *melodrama* merely as *tragedy* which doesn't come off. Tragedy may fail to come off

drama, viz., Dr. Johnson's *Irene*. Or an author may aim only at melodrama, and what he does may be good or bad melodrama. That which is based entirely on cliché situations and stereotyped characters—"Western" stories, for instance—can certainly make no appeal at all at the adult level. But it is possible to have plots with originality, and characters which show some psychological penetration, and these may be entertaining enough at their own level. The participants in an adventure story need not be stock characters; they may be so complexly presented that the work *tends* toward the problem play or the tragedy.

Such a transition is difficult, though, for the melodrama really deals in escape, whereas at a more serious level escape is impossible. The essence of tragedy is the inescapability of the issue; Hamlet and Phaedra and Orestes, regardless of what happens to them, go on to deal uncompromisingly with the crises their lives present. Note further that the possibility of escape depends at least partly on the kind of situation the character is in. In melodrama he has to escape from ambush, from the sheriff, from different kinds of physical dangers; granted good luck or sufficient strength and adroitness—with which the author usually provides his characters—escape usually takes place. The situations are physical. In problem plays, the situation is likely to be a social one, as in various plays by Ibsen, Chekhov and Galsworthy: the individual has in some way to deal with the conventions or the modes of conduct or attitudes of a society. Either side may be right, or the merits may be divided, but at any rate a solution is not easily arrived at if the social context is to be taken seriously. Strength and adroitness cannot easily provide escape from a society set in motion. Unlike melodrama, the end is not predictable. But in *tragedy* the problem is still more difficult: the situation is moral, and the individual, we may say, has to cope with a universe. The universe appears, naturally, not on the stage (like society) but in the mind of the protagonist; though the conflicting elements may have an external symbolic form, the conflict is essentially internal. The protagonist has a sense of moral order—the universal with which he must deal. It is none the less real for existing in his mind; indeed, it is the more real for not being a physical or personal enemy that can be destroyed, or a society that may disintegrate and thus perhaps justify the individual. In its intangibility lies its indestructibility, its universality. There is no escape, and it is in this sense that tragedy may be said to be concerned with fate or destiny.

In the light of the foregoing we ought to be better able to understand the unsatisfactoriness of the popular use of the word *tragedy* today. Whenever someone is killed in an automobile accident, newspapers speak of the "tragedy," but clearly there is no tragedy at all; there is no voluntary or meaningful action (though an automobile crash conceivably *could* be used to express a tragic issue). Too, such accidents are spoken of as "fatal," though in no acceptable sense is fate involved at all; *fatal*, as used, means that someone has died, though actually "fate" may bring many kinds of experience besides death. Again, we find *tragedy* used of unhappy experiences of children, though obviously tragedy is only an adult experience. Often, too, we hear unhappy endings, in life or literature, spoken of as "tragic." Yet, as a matter of fact, the kind of dealing with the moral universe that constitutes tragedy need not end "unhappily," as we can see from Aeschylus's trilogy the *Oresteia;* and, on the other hand, there are "unhappy endings" that are *not* necessarily tragic —the death or punishment, let us say, of criminal or vicious people ("His tragic career came to an unhappy end"), the results of illness, injury, fire, economic disaster, etc. It is possible that a

dramatist or novelist *might* use such events to indicate the kind of values an individual has and the kind of choices he makes; but they are not tragic simply because they are unpleasant and undesirable experiences.

By way of summary: melodrama grows out of physical and material difficulties, and escape from danger is the characteristic process, although its effects may depend upon injury and death, either as events that fail to attain a desired tragic quality, or as means that the author uses deliberately for their own sake; the problem play is characteristically concerned with situations in the broadest sense social, where various kinds of solutions may be worked out or suggested, but where, since we are working with more fully characterized and developed people than in melodrama, mere "escape" would be a trivial evasion of the issue; tragedy is concerned with universal moral issues which the individual has to face largely alone and which he can in no sense escape. Of course such definitions are not to be regarded as final, for you will be able to think of types of situations which are usable in various ways. Take, for instance, legal difficulties: in general a conflict with the law is likely to be melodramatic, with stress on escape (the unexpected evidence at the trial, the last-minute reprieve, etc.). On the other hand, in such a play as Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*, which deals with the varying statuses of rich and poor before the law, a legal matter is the basis of a problem play. And in Sophocles' *Antigone* we have a tragedy in which the situation, or one aspect of it, is "legal": but here we have the law in conflict with a higher imperative, and it is this latter which really defines the quality of the play. Obviously, then, the raw materials do not in themselves predetermine the mood of the play, for they can be used in different ways (we have already stressed the importance of the author's attitude). But this must be said: certain raw materials in general do yield more readily to one type of treatment than another, just as rubber and iron, for instance, whatever the diversity of the uses to which each may be put, are not exactly interchangeable. By and large, situations involving danger, threats, violence, etc., furnish very great problems to the writer who wants to use them for something superior to melodrama. He will require much more than ordinary skill to make such situations function symbolically instead of one-dimensionally. Conversely, if he wants merely to "entertain" or to "thrill" his audience, he has his composition almost ready-made.

We might attempt a further distinction of types in terms of the kind of effect produced by each. We have said above that melodrama "entertains" or "thrills"; in a sense, of course, all drama does that. If it does not entertain, if it does not afford pleasure, it—as well as all other literature—fails. Obviously it must evoke the reader's emotions and stimulate his imagination. But then we come to other questions: how do this? to what end?

Compare, for instance, the kind of emotional experience one has at a good athletic contest with that called for by a piece of "good" literature. The one gives a kind of tenseness and exhilaration at the moment, and that is the end of it. The latter likewise elicits a state of concentration and absorption, perhaps longer or shorter than the former, but this is only the beginning; the experience is capable of repetition, enlargement, revision; it is accompanied by and stimulates reflection. The game is pleasurable at one level; but it means nothing. The literary work is pleasurable too; but it is likewise meaningful; it is a commentary on life, and in so far as it is fully grasped, it has the effect of knowledge, it may heighten observation, change attitudes, and widen understanding; it brings a kind of growth.

Similarly there are levels within

literature itself, and that of melodrama is really the game level: excitement, tension, suspense for their own sake, for the kind of pleasure those things bring, and nothing left over. You discard all your powers of apprehension except curiosity about the outcome; you do not ask, Is it worthwhile? or, What does it mean? In the problem play, however, the conflict is not for the conflict's sake (as in the game or melodrama). The conflict introduces issues and, consequently, a sense of right and wrong, or at least of better and worse. One's emotional response comes to involve reflection upon the situation represented by the plot, and one may well acquire a modified or clarified view of the situation. Hence the problem play leaves a sort of residue, as the melodrama does not. If the melodrama is analogous to the game, perhaps the problem play is analogous to an election or some other form of civic or political activity: the emotional experience is closely tied to an awareness of the issues involved, and the issues endure after the election or campaign.

In tragedy, finally, one's emotional concern is also identified with one's sense of a problem; but the concern is infinitely more intense and profound because of the greater importance, universality, and pervasiveness of the problem; because, in a word, it is a problem not of a group or society but of all people, one which they must face at all times, not in the easier form of an outer problem which they can combat, but as an aspect of themselves with which they must, at bottom, deal privately, though our attention may be focused (as in *Hamlet*) upon the outer situations which reflect the private transactions. Perhaps we may say that tragedy grows out of the nature of man, out of the conflict of good and evil in which he is always engaged. Hence the durability of tragedy as compared with the problem play, which, because of the forceful impact of any immediate problem, may seem overwhelmingly intense in its day but which, unless it by some miracle transcends the temporary, must surely fade into forgetfulness as a new day brings forth new problems.

Perhaps we may learn something about ourselves from the fact that tragedy is not "popular." It is the form which makes man face the most serious issues instead of escaping from them; he is brought face to face with himself, with the complexities of his own nature; a high quality of attention is demanded of him; and he is fed no splendid illusions, no sugary optimism, to make reality look simpler or more manageable than it is. What, on the other hand, does he find in "escape literature"? Several things, perhaps: (1) characters who escape; Good always triumphantly escapes from Evil—an outside force which is disposed of as if it were a sort of pest; (2) escape for the reader—from the commonplace into a charming and exciting world where achievement is easy; (3) most seriously, escape from the adult realm of responsibility, where the logic of human character must be met, where experience must be seen fully, and evil dealt with as an intimate and goading reality.

"Escape literature" has a place—though not too large a one—which it would be unduly solemn to deny. The danger is not in enjoying it on occasion but in mistaking escape for interpretation, taking opium for food. To see only the good is very bad indeed. Perhaps the worst fault is that of writers who trade in charm and optimism, distorting experience to please the unsuspecting and the uncritical.

In the evaluation of the different levels of literature, the equipment of the reader is of course important. A person without literary experience or critical habits may honestly take clichés, stereotypes, the simple and easy, the superficial and sentimental, for the real thing. But experience and the critical habit can both be acquired, and one

need not long be taken in by the false and pretentious. It goes without saying, of course, that the will to discriminate is essential: a person usually content with any play that boasts a "plot," regardless of its triteness or obviousness or improbability, or a person who regards literature merely as the pleasurable repetition of well-worn patterns, will have to work to recognize (1) that some plots represent the natural workings of fully developed characters and thus come to be humanly significant; (2) that some authors try to *do this* but fail; and (3) that *others don't even try*.

II. SHORTER DEFINITIONS

ALLEGORY: *Narrative in which the persons and events stand for a system of* ideas. The characters are *often personifications of objects or abstractions*, as in *Everyman*. *Parable* implies, [illegible] sharply. See pp. 100 ff.

ANTICLIMAX: *A disappointing loss of* tension or force, a "let down"; a failure to reach an expected intensity. See *climax*.

ASIDE: See pp. 30 and 487.

ATMOSPHERE: Mood or feeling created by events, places, and situations. Compare with, and distinguish from, *tone*. See p. 490.

ATTITUDE: *This volume is often concerned* with the attitude of the author to his materials, that is, his understanding and interpretation of them. His attitude expresses itself *in the use of the comic or tragic mode*, in the use or non-use of *irony*, in the *tone* and *form* of the work, etc. See *pp. 75, 248 ff., 383 ff., and 443–4.*

CHORUS: A singing and dancing group from whose words, in Dionysiac ritual, Greek drama evolved. Used, later, to comment on or interpret the *action, to help create tone; to dramatize* the universal significance of the conflict. The classical studies of the Renaissance led to wide use of *the chorus* in drama since 1500. See pp. 458–9 and 479–80; *Aristotle's Poetics*, 18.

CHRONICLE PLAY: A play on a historical or biographical theme. The term *usually* implies a chronological *structure*, which is often loosely knit or *episodic*. The chronicle play is hardly to be conceived of as a special type, however; the problem of the author's ultimate attitude *toward his material* is the same as in any other play. See pp. 376–7.

CLICHÉ: A worn-out expression such as "*shaking like a leaf.*" *A cliché*, however, may be an effective part of a characterization. *A cliché situation is* a stereotyped one—the last-minute *rescue, and so on. A cliché plays for* the *stock response*. See *Aristotle's Poetics*, 10.

CLIMAX: The most intense moment of conflict; the turning point. See *denouement*. For a discussion of the arrangement of materials in climactic order, see pp. 54–55 and 143.

CLOSET DRAMA: *Drama intended to* be read rather than produced.

COINCIDENCE: In drama, simultaneous occurrence of two events, such as two people's happening to come to *the same place* at the same time, etc. Although it may be used functionally—for instance, to create an ironic *effect—coincidence frequently* indicates inability to work out a plot in terms of character. See pp. 64–65 and 489.

COMEDY: A term so loosely and variously *used, and* conventionally applied to so wide an area of dramatic writing, that extended discussion would be required *to formulate* a satisfactory definition. In this book,

is to be contrasted with the comparatively "straight" development characteristic of more superficial literary works. See *Aristotle's Poetics*, 10, 11, 12, and pp. 284, 299, 308, 386–7, and 447.

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE: A character's meditating with himself; the equivalent of *soliloquy*.

LOGICAL: As applied to drama or other literary works, consistent with the terms of character, situation, and mood which the author has adopted. See pp. 489 ff.

MELODRAMA: See pp. 491 and 494 ff.

METAPHOR: See *imagery*.

METHOD: All the procedures which the author uses to accomplish his end. See *form*; also pp. 15 and 20 ff.

MOTIVATION: Logical accounting for the behavior of the *dramatis personae*, primarily in terms of "motives" but also by means of other devices which produce anticipation of future events. See pp. 24, 44 and 488 ff.

NEO-CLASSICAL: Applied to certain beliefs and practices of the European literary world of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. In drama, neo-classicism was marked by devotion to the "rules": the three unities, the use of a chorus, the avoidance of violence on the stage, the use of only royal or noble characters in tragedy, a severe "correctness" in language, etc. The rules were believed (with only partial correctness) to be derived from ancient practice and Aristotelian precept. See *unities*, p. 315 and p. 469.

OBJECTIVE: *Objective* and *subjective* are less applicable in drama than in other literary forms in that the dramatist must speak entirely through the characters and therefore has less opportunity for the direct comment and expression of personal feelings and views which we call *subjective*. He can of course treat one character purely as his mouthpiece, and when the words of such a character outweigh the *logical* demands of character and situation, the work may be called subjective. As applied to the manner of characterization, *objective* and *subjective* also find less use in drama in that the form of drama—speech and action—by its nature makes for an objective method. By such devices as *soliloquy*, of course, it is possible to get within a character, but this is still far removed from the direct presentation of thought and feeling—the *subjective* method—which is possible in fiction.

PARABLE: See *allegory*.

PARADOX: A statement or an occurrence which is apparently self-contradictory but at the same time profoundly logical. See *irony*.

PATHOS: Literally "suffering"; hence, the quality of a situation that evokes compassion or sympathy. Pathos usually implies weakness, helplessness, insurmountable difficulties. (1) An author may represent a legitimately pathetic situation; (2) he may attempt to evoke a sense of pathos which the characters and situation do not justify and thus fall into *sentimentality*; (3) he may aim at *tragedy* but, by failure to endow his protagonist with adequate will or strength to struggle, may achieve merely the pathetic. See *Aristotle's Poetics*, 12 and 13, and pp. 312–3.

PERSONIFICATION: Presenting as an animate character something inanimate, such as an object or an abstraction. See *allegory*.

PLOT: The structure of the action. See *Aristotle's Poetics*, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, and 17.

POETIC DRAMA: Drama in which the lines make regular use of the devices of poetry—rhythm, metaphor, other kinds of *imagery*, etc. Poetic drama is not to be thought of as a special or unique mode but rather as the form toward which all drama, by the demands of its own nature, logically moves. See pp. 23 ff.

POETRY, LANGUAGE OF: See *imagery;* also pp. 23–4, 186–7, 312, and 488.

PROBABILITY: Logicalness; consistency with the terms of character and situation that are used. Probability is often said to rely upon an author's grasp of the "universal," that which is characteristic of human experience, that which "may" happen. Aristotle recurrently insists upon the probable. See *Aristotle's Poetics,* especially points 8 and 19, but also 9, 11, and 15.

PROBLEM PLAY: See *theme;* also pp. 81, 314–5, and 494 ff.

PROGRESSION: Forward movement; the development of the situation. See pp. 29 ff. 44, and 286–7.

PROPAGANDA: See *theme, sentimentality.*

REALISTIC: Characterized by fidelity to the generally observed facts of experience. Compare *romantic.* See p. 487.

RHETORICAL STRUCTURE: Arrangement of the words of the *dramatis personae.* See p. 493.

ROMANTIC: Implies that which is different from everyday experience: unusual, remote, exotic, idyllic, etc. Compare *realistic.* As used in this book, *romantic* does not apply to the Romantic Movement and is not contrasted with *classical.* See under Some Principles of Drama, p. 488.

RULES: See *neo-classical.*

SELECTION: The author's choice of the materials with which he must create the effects he desires. The problem is especially pointed in drama because of the limitations imposed by the form. See pp. 27 ff. and 74.

SENTIMENTALITY: In a person, emotional response in excess of the occasion; in a literary work, the effort to secure an emotional response not prepared for, or not justified by, the character and situation. Compare *pathos.* Emotions frequently played upon are grief, pity, and love of goodness (compare *stock response*). Hence *sentimental comedy,* which plays up to the reader's love of goodness rather than to his sense of the ridiculous (see pp. 248 ff.). Such comedy tends to split good and evil and put them into separate characters where they can be easily loved and hated. Note that this simplification of character is also characteristic of *propaganda* literature; the doctrinaire and the sentimental tend to go hand in hand, just as they did in the eighteenth century. *Sentimental tragedy* subordinates its grasp of moral issues and complexity of character to the more obvious appeals to pity and other emotional responses. See pp. 183 ff., also *Aristotle's Poetics,* 12, 13, 15.

SIGNIFICANT VARIATION: A type of structure in which the effect is secured by an alteration in a pattern of action which has become familiar by repetition. See pp. 10 ff and 108.

SIMILE: See *imagery.*

SOLILOQUY: An "alone-talk"; the "thinking aloud" of one character; a speech which is not part of a dialogue. See pp 30–1 and 487.

STAGE SETTINGS, CONVENTIONS OF: See p 487.

STOCK RESPONSE: The immediate, standard, predictable reaction of an uncritical reader to the conventional appeal of a stereotyped character, situation, or emotion. See *cliché, sentimentality,* and p. 489.

STRUCTURE The arrangement of the larger elements, especially the *episodes* and the details of action within episodes; structure is functional in that it is an important means of presenting *theme.* See pp. 54–6, 63–6, 104 ff., 244 ff., 283–4, 307–8, and 308–9; also *Aristotle's Poetics,* 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 17.

STYLE. Usually denotes the selection and arrangement of words. In drama, the language is determined to a considerable extent by the requirements of character. Characters may of course speak wittily or metaphorically or prosaically, etc., and their language may change somewhat as situations change. For the relation

of witty language to theme, see p. 78; for the implications of imagery and word-play, pp. 330–1, 348–9, and 381, and the notes on the plays by Euripides, Lope de Vega, and Racine in Appendix A; for other comments on the significance of language, pp. 143, 185–7, and 312; also *imagery*, *poetic drama*.

SUBJECTIVE: See *objective*.

SUSPENSE: A combination of uncertainty about and intense interest in the outcome of an action or the way in which the outcome is to be brought about.

SYMBOL: An object or incident which stands for something else, frequently, something limited and concrete which stands for something inclusive and abstract. For notes on symbols, see the analysis of *Rosmersholm*, *passim*. A specific dramatic situation representing universal or recurrent human relationships may be said to be symbolic (see pp. 75 ff). A plot itself may be a symbol (see p. 448).

TEMPO: See pp. 490 ff.

THEATRICAL: Literally, characteristic of the theatre. Although it might appear to be synonymous with *dramatic*, which is often mistakenly used for it (and indeed "good theatre" is always dramatic), *theatrical* has come to mean artificially contrived effects, implausible situations introduced merely because they are "striking" or spectacular, contrasts and clashes which exist for their own sake rather than as the logical products of theme and character. The theatrical situation is melodramatic rather than dramatic; it is external and showy, and often coincidental; it is "sensational"—for instance, breaking up the wedding ceremony before a church full of guests. Theatrical speech is characterized by inappropriate elevation, excessive emphasis, clichés, pompousness instead of inherent seriousness, rant instead of emotional force, the highfalutin instead of the truly poetic. Hence, a "theatrical manner" suggests exaggeration, self-consciousness, posturing. A person of perception will dismiss as "theatrical" what a naïve observer is likely to consider "so dramatic."

THEME: In one sense, the general subject with which a work is concerned—for instance, in *Everyman*, salvation; in *Rosmersholm*, the relation of tradition and reason. See also p. 444. In another sense, the "meaning" implied by the drama; what the author is "saying"; his interpretation of experience. See pp. 77, 101 ff., 244. *Thesis* is sometimes also used in this sense, but "thesis play" or "purpose play" usually suggests a drama of which the primary intention is to set forth or imply a specific program of action. Such an intention implies the subordination of character and structure to the "message" that the author wishes to deliver. This is the risk always run by the *problem play*, and rarely avoided by literature of *propaganda*, with its devotion to bringing about courses of action.

THESIS: See *theme*.

TONE: General effect produced by an author's selection and treatment of materials—as comic, tragic, gay, etc. A product of the author's attitude to his materials and his skill in conveying that attitude to the reader. More inclusive than but not wholly distinguishable from *atmosphere*. See p. 490.

TRAGEDY: A term so much debated that a satisfactory brief definition is impossible. In general, this book treats tragedy as that form of drama in which the protagonist undergoes a morally significant struggle; in which the conflict is rather within a character than between characters or between a character and external forces (though the conflicting elements may be symbolized in external form); and in which the protagonist, although treated sympathetically, incurs guilt

of which the expiation (by suffering, death, or other means) is part of the dramatic problem In the main this book relies upon the Aristotelian ac- [illegible]

[illegible] Play, and Tragedy, see pp 495 ff.

TRAGIC FLAW: See *Aristotle's Poetics*, 13.

UNDERSTATEMENT: See *irony*.

UNITIES: The "unities" of time, place, and action were considered essential by Renaissance critics: of time, that the action take place within a day; of place, that the action take place within one building or city; of action, that there be a single plot of limited extent. See *unity*, *concentration*. Many dramatists, such as Shakespeare, paid little attention to the unities of time and place Racine was more attentive to them. Various modern dramatists—Ibsen is one—are in practice comparatively faithful to the unities, although only unity of action is generally considered to have theoretical justification. See pp. 27 ff., 314; also *Aristotle's Poetics*, 2, 7.

UNITY: "One-ness." In general, the quality of a literary work in which all the characters, action, language, etc. are functionally related to a single objective. *Unity* may mean *unity of theme*, by which different strands of action may be bound together; see pp. 180–4, 376–7, 386–7. *Unity* is sometimes restricted to the meaning of *unity of action*, the most important of the three "unities." See *unities*; see *Aristotle's Poetics*, 6, 7.

WELL-MADE PLAY: An influential nineteenth-century type of drama, chiefly the work of the French dramatist Scribe, in which all details of the action were supposed to be very realistically worked out, with especial reference to cause and effect. Many of the devices now seem artificial and even melodramatic See p. 80.

INDEX

This index does not include part II of the Glossary